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JANUARY \ FEBRUARY 2016

IF SEX WITHOUT LOVE EXISTS

WHY CAN'T PEOPLE UNDERSTAND

THAT LOVE WITHOUT SEX

EXISTS TOO?

Asexuality

Part of the Sexual Continuum

The author is a local college student and wishes to remain anonymous

You most likely believe that one can only identify as gay, straight, or bisexual. But sexual identities are much more complicated than this simple reduction to two or three different identities. There are several orientations that are unknown to many.

I fit into one of those never-discussed identities. I am asexual.

What is asexuality? Asexuality does not mean reproduction without sexual intercourse. Asexuality is the state in which one does not experience sexual attraction.

You might be tempted to call this identity fake, or say that an asexual is just in denial or hasn't met the right person, but there are millions of asexuals around the world. One percent of the U.S. population is asexual. That translates to probably about 17 students on our campus.

You might be tempted to call this identity fake...

David Jay knew there had to be other people out there who identified as what he had deemed as "nonsexual."

In 2001, he founded AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network), the largest online network for asexuals. He is the most prominent voice of asexuality in the media and has appeared on several major news outlets. In these cases, asexuality was dismissed by the anchors, who did not understand how one could simply not experience sexual attraction. An MSNBC anchor even asked how it was possible that Jay had no desire for sex if he hadn't even tried it yet.

In a scene from the 2011 documentary (A)sexual, about the lives and experiences of several asexuals including Jay himself, Jay is shown leading a small group of fellow aces (a colloquial term for asexuals) at a Pride event, only to be met with misunderstanding and contempt from

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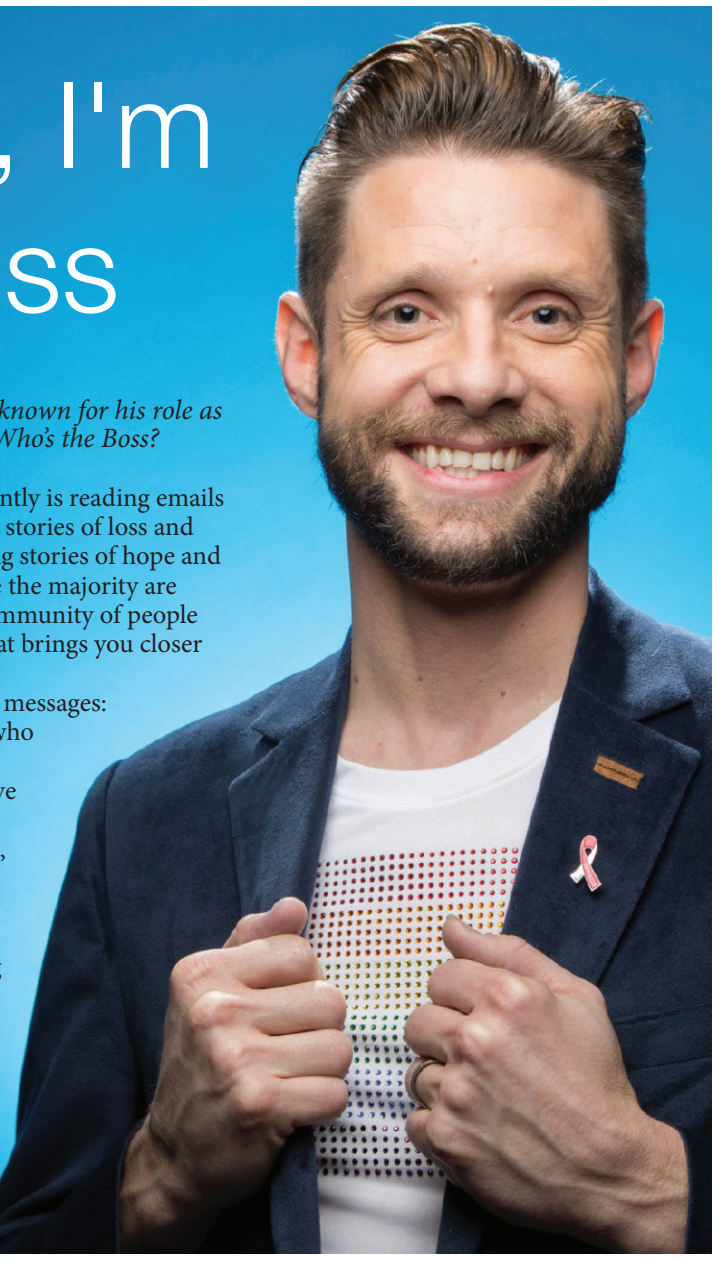
After Meth, I'm Still the Boss



By Danny Pintauro

***Central Voice Exclusive** - Danny Pintauro is best known for his role as Jonathan Bower on the popular American sitcom Who's the Boss?*

One of the things I've been doing a lot of recently is reading emails from supporters around the world. I've heard tragic stories of loss and love, courageous stories of survival, and encouraging stories of hope and happiness. While I've heard from all types of people the majority are from men and women living with HIV. We are a community of people who've been through something life altering and that brings you closer together even from thousands of miles apart.

But there's an undercurrent in so many of the messages: Meth. I was expecting to hear from a lot of people who have come through Meth or are still grappling with Meth. What I wasn't expecting is just how many have Meth and HIV in the same sentence.

My encounters with Meth started in late 2002, at the beginning of the 'meth epidemic' that swept through major cities around the country. And my Meth use mirrored the timeline of the epidemic, with the largest number of people using meth being recorded in 2004-2005. In a 2004 CDC study, the rate of use among gay men in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City was 22%, 16%, and 14% respectively. That's an astounding number: nearly a quarter of all gay men in San Francisco in 2004 were using meth. In 2005, the Center for HIV/AIDS Education Studies and Training

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Syrian & Iraqi Immigration Affects Gay Refugees

ANALYSIS

By Frank Pizzoli

"I would have voted against the bill," State Rep. Brian Sims tells *Central Voice*.

In his second state House term, Sims is currently running for the US House seat now occupied by 11-term Democratic U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah who was indicted last July on corruption charges.

Sims is referring to a Nov. 19, 2015 vote by the Republican-held House to beef up - some say add 6 to 12 months to a process that already takes 6 to 12 months - existing security checks for Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

The controversial vote on the "American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015" came six days after Paris terrorist attacks killing 129 and injuring 300 others by Islamic State, a Sunni militant group that controls portions of Syria and Iraq.

The scenario gets more complicated.

Estimates are that about 5% of the estimated 50,000 refugees are LGBT individuals who face a double-edged sword: refugees from their homeland where they are maimed, beaten, and killed fleeing to an temporary country of transit where they are also just as despised.

Rejected by Senate Democrats, the vote to tighten

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Political Update

INTERNATIONAL

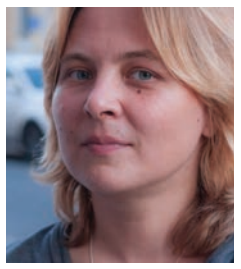
• Venezuelan Transgender Woman Elected

• A lawyer has become the first openly transgender person elected to the Venezuelan National Assembly. Popular Will, a left-leaning Socialist party that is pro-LGBT, has announced that Tamara Adrián had been elected to represent the Venezuelan capital of Caracas. National Electoral Council President Tibisay Lucena announced the governing United Socialist Party of Venezuela that President Nicolás Maduro heads lost its majority in the National Assembly.

• Gunmen Kill Three at Acapulco Gay Festival

Three people were killed and five injured when armed gunmen attacked the "Reina Gay" festival in Acapulco Nov. 30. Attackers stormed the festival, opening fire on the crowd police reports indicate. Three men aged 23 to 33 were killed and five others were hospitalized with injuries. Authorities have had to suspend classes at some rural schools near Acapulco in recent weeks and install security forces at others due to a spike in violence near the Pacific coast port, which has the highest homicide rate of any city in Mexico. Acapulco is located in Guerrero state, the town where 43 Mexican students studied at a rural teachers college before disappearing last year.

• Russian LGBT Activist Granted Asylum



Civil and political activist Natalia Tsymbalova, who left Russia for Spain over a year ago has been granted asylum by the Spanish authorities. Tsymbalova is the founder and leader of the "Alliance of Straights and LGBT for Equality" and was also press secretary and one of the leaders of the "Democratic Petersburg" Coalition.

• Columbian High Court Rules for Adoption

Colombia's constitutional court opened the door for same-sex couples to legally adopt children in the conservative South American nation, reports Joshua Goodman. In the 6-2 ruling, the court said adoption agencies can't discriminate against gay, lesbian and transsexual couples during an adoption process. Colombia's Roman Catholic Church immediately denounced the decision as violating the rights of children and going against the wishes of the majority of Colombians who polls say overwhelmingly reject giving gays the same rights to marriage and adoption as heterosexual couples. Supporters of the decision say it could help streamline the adoption of some 10,000 children in Colombia under the protection of welfare agencies.

• US Russian Embassy Exposes Forgery

"Next time you are going to use fake letters — send them to us. We'll be happy to correct the mistakes," the US embassy in Moscow tweeted at the newspaper *Izvestia*, reports *Buzzfeed*. The major Russian newspaper published an article alleging that that the US had put a controversial Russian LGBT activist up to claiming that top government officials are gay. "LGBT-activists are being used to discredit Russian public servants," reads the headline. "By the order of US Department of State, most effective members of Russian government and parliament are being accused of being of non-traditional sexual orientation," the article said in bold. The report claimed that Nikolai Alekseyev — an activist who other LGBT rights supporters have at times said was working with the Kremlin to discredit the movement — was ordered by U.S. officials to claim top officials are gay. The smoking gun *Izvestia* offered as proof was correspondence from U.S. officials to Alekseyev the newspaper claims was "uncovered by hackers."

• Gay Rights Vote Undermines Visa Deal

Ukrainian legislators voted down a gay rights law in a decision likely to kill hope of EU visa-free travel by the beginning of 2016. The Commission and Ukraine started visa talks in 2008. But the EU made the deal conditional on anti-corruption and human rights reforms. Meanwhile, Russia is going backwards: A new law, tabled last week by the Communist Party, proposes fines or 15-day detentions for "the public expression of non-traditional sexual relations, manifested in a public demonstration of personal perverted sexual preferences in public places."

• Transgender Woman Convicted of Sodomy

Reports say a transgender woman in Zambia faces 15 years in prison after a judge found her guilty of sodomy. The *Zambia Daily Mail,* a Zambian newspaper, says that Magistrate Derrick Mate Chingumbe convicted the trans woman in a court in the country's Mongu District. A 19-year-old taxi driver told the court that he met the defendant at a local bar and it was "love at first sight." The taxi driver told the court the defendant was dressed as a woman when they met and that she "deceived" him. The plaintiff testified that the trans woman asked him to turn off the lights before they had anal sex.

• Ukraine Passes Protections

The Ukrainian parliament has passed a law barring employment discrimination that includes protections for against LGBT people, a step the European Union had made a condition of closer ties with the former Soviet country. "It's better to have a gay parade … than Russian tanks in the center of the Ukrainian capital," said Yuri Lutsenko, a Ukranian lawmaker, urging his colleagues to vote for the bill protecting LGBT employees. Lawmakers had twice rejected the nondiscrimination bill earlier over opposition to the LGBT protections. This was the last of a suite of legislation required by the EU — which also included controversial laws against corruption — for Ukraine to qualify for a program allowing its citizens to travel to the EU without needing visas. Russian allies have used hostility towards LGBT rights to try to build opposition to the EU for several years.

NATIONAL

• Save the Date

The anniversary date same-sex couples were married in Pennsylvania while their marriages were banned is the actual date of the ceremony. After two years in divorce court, that's the settlement reached by the state Department of Health and D. Bruce Hanes, Montgomery County court clerk. The Health Department had sued Hanes to stop him from issuing same-sex marriage licenses in 2013, when the state's ban was still in force. Pennsylvania's same-sex marriage ban was overturned May 20, 2014.

• San Bernardino Shooting Took Gay Victim

One of the 14 people killed Thursday in a shooting rampage at the San Bernardino Inland Regional Center, a center for the developmentally disabled, was gay. Daniel Kaufman, 42, ran a coffee shop inside the center's building. Kaufman's boyfriend, Ryan Reyes, told the Los Angeles Times that Kaufman was a free spirit who would often strike up a conversation with folks he met. Reyes, 32, said he dropped off Kaufman, who didn't drive, at his work the morning of the shooting and the two men shared texts and photos until 10:37 a.m. when Kaufman sent him a photo of a friend attending a comic book conference. About an hour later, Reyes's sister sent him a text: "Hey Ry does Daniel work at the Regional Center in Sb? Check the news." Reyes repeatedly called Kaufman but was sent to voicemail. "Call me ASAP!" he texted, with no reply. The next 22 hours were tortuous hell for Reyes who received numerous conflicting reports—until he learned that Kaufman was among the 14 murdered at the center when he was not among the traumatized survivors unloaded off buses at the community center.

• No Guy-on-Guy Dancing for ABC

ABC put the kibosh on two dudes dancing hip to hip on *Dancing with the Stars* repots TMZ. Sources connected with the show told TMZ, the issue came up over an openly gay artist who goes by the name Who Is Fancy, who will debut his new song, "Boys Like You". The song is about a man falling in love with another man. TMS also reported that ABC agreed to allow "near dancing" (like sort of pregnant) during the performance, like a recent appearance by two men - Alek and Carlos - who have shared the stage in a Cirque-like performance than romantic ballroom dancing. At press time, ABC and the rep said they had no comment. Meanwhile, a 2001 *Access Hollywood* story reported that "Former *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* star Carson Kressley will dance with professional Anna Trebunskaya, but a *Dancing with the Stars* producer has revealed that they once considered pairing him with another man.

• NHL ready for gay player

When the National Hockey League brought on *You Can Play* as an official partner in the spring of 2013, the hope was that the league's first openly gay player wasn't far behind. Two and a half years later, we are still waiting, reports Pierre LeBrun, ESPN's NHL Writer. Patrick Burke, co-founder of *You Can Play*, says "We felt that the work the league was doing, the culture that the league had, the way our guys responded not just to our initiative, but to the LGBT community in general, I think we thought for sure by now there would be an out player in the NHL." Burke said *You Can Play* has heard from gay players in the league. "If we could coordinate everyone we know in professional sports, not just hockey, to come out all at once, it would be world-changing overnight. But for a variety of different reasons, there are men and women who still don't think it's the right decision for them to come out at this time." Brandon Burke, Patrick's brother came out in 2009. He was a student-manager of a college team but with a family association to the NHL. He later died in a car crash.

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WHEN BLACKS WANTED TO CARRY GUNS IN THE SIXTIES TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE POLICE

THE NRA SUPPORT RONALD REAGAN SIGNING THE 1967 MULFORD ACT THAT RESTRICTED PEOPLE CARRYING GUNS.

Pick Your Favorite Prediction

Frank Pizzoli

It's true that Dionne Warwick didn't know her *Psychic Friends Network* was going broke when it did. So much for the crystal ball theory of diving the future. So we looked back at what others have predicted. You be the judge.

1982

In 1982 it was predicted that the telephone will be automatic worldwide and it will have full video and audio capabilities. It was also predicted that year that there will be a revolution in Saudi Arabia. The salaries will be overthrown in a Third World war narrowly averted. One of those predictions came true. The jury is still out on the second prediction.

A cure for cancer, the common cold, and viral aim ailments will be found and there will be a similar prophylactic for all three.

The metabolic medicine or "antidote" will be found to prevent overweight. Then humans can eat all they want with no consequences and still keep model thin. So much for that prediction

Trains will make a comeback in the US and will be built lighter and faster. So much for that prediction too. High-speed rapid-transit systems will have brought many cities back to life and created in town/new town mega structures where we work, live, and play in one environment

1992

Almost no males and females will be very guilty about masturbation.

Severe guilt about premarital sex will be felt by less than 10% of the population.

Men will learn to be better lovers I will almost always see that women are given on: orgasms is a desire to have them.

Many more males will be using condoms as a STD prevention device.

Millions of people will quit Orthodox religious groups unless these groups liberate their sexual attitudes.

1993

An alternate source of power will be found and used universally instead of oil, gas, and electricity. It will be made from some sort of "atomic" power or power from the sun.

The jury trial will be cut down and really offered, allowed, or used.

2020

For the next 2 to 5 years the anti-homosexual forces will continue to be heard from regularly. More and more homosexuals will come out of the closet, and homosexuals will become a stronger political force in the country.

Bisexuality will become more "fashionable".

In 10 to 20 years, we will wonder what the fuss was about for so many years.

More than 75% of married males and 65% of married women will commit adultery at some point during their marriage.

More than 90% of single men and 85% of single women will have premarital sex.

A virtually foolproof and harmless method of contraception will be invented.

2022

The long transportation corridors now linking your cities will develop monorail type continuous transport systems and apartment ribbons, which will have highways on their roofs, leaving more open land.

2030

Advances in our understanding of the process of plant growth and programming of crystal structures will enable us to grow buildings.

BRAD GEBHART

First they came

By Martin Niemoller

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

"First they came" is a famous statement and provocative poem written by Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) about the cowardice of German intellectuals following the Nazis' rise to power and the subsequent purging of their chosen targets, group after group. Many variations and adaptations in the spirit of the original have been published in the English language. It deals with themes of persecution, guilt and responsibility.

voice box

COMPREHENSIVE

What a fantastic and comprehensive article! Thanks so much!

- Sam Gehler, Field Director, PA Competes

Editor's reply: That's out goal - comprehensive. We don't have to be the biggest or the quickest, just the best. Our mission isn't a graduate school assignment - fast and wrong or incomplete.

THANK YOU!

While I didn't win, I'm thankful for the experience and I'm overwhelmed by the kindness of so many people who volunteered, sent money, and just spread the word. Looking back on the results, I'm proud of what we accomplished. With 44.2% of the vote, I received a higher percentage of the overall vote than any modern day Democratic candidate for a Dauphin County row office. I'm so thankful and humbled by all of this support.

- Eric Gutshall, Candidate, Dauphin County Controller

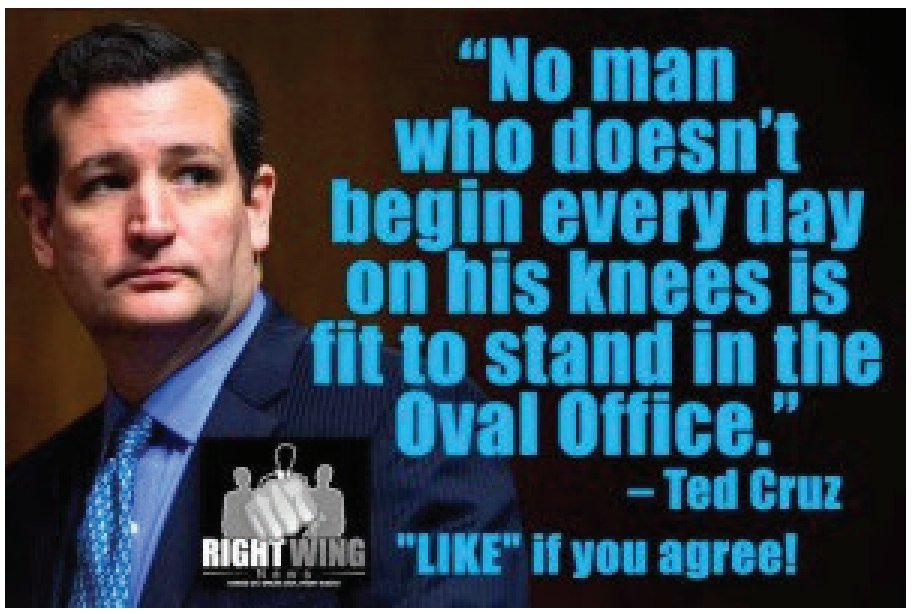
HISTORY LESSON

When I saw the film Stonewall I couldn't believe how the guy who made the film, he's gay, changed most of the story. He created a fictional character, a corn-fed white kid from the Midwest, who the filmmaker then had act as if he was the energy behind the riot. He wasn't. What was even more disturbing was how many queer folks I know, especially some who were around in 1969, didn't even know the character was pure fiction - filmmaking drag, nothing else. How the heck can a person, and the gay director, get Stonewall wrong? It's the most talked about, defining event of the lgbt civil rights movement.

- Queer Spinster

E-mail your thoughts to posops@aol.com

Cruz Control?



Could this be one of those times when one segment of the population can only see something hilarious, while another (the majority?) can't see it at all? The image went viral on the social media for those in on the joke, but the double entendre was apparently missed by the editors of Rightwing.com. Which brings us to another thing we learned: there is a website called Rightwing.com! And it's very popular! Now we know. Reprinted from *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide.*

OR - from the *Can't Make It Up* Department...

From Karl Frisch: Who would have guessed that #TedCruz of all people was a Tom of Finland model in his spare time? #GOP2016 #LGBT. *Central Voice* interviewed Frisch on his recent trip to Cuba *(Cuba Faces Change, July-Aug 2015).*

BRAD GEBHART

Political Update

continued from page 3

• Racial Gap among Positive Men Widens

HIVPlus reports that buried in some upbeat reporting about the latest U.S. statistics on HIV from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are some very disturbing findings about an increase in infection among gay men of color. The CDC reports steep declines in diagnoses among heterosexuals — 35 percent —and people who inject drugs — 63 percent — from 2005 to 2014. HIV diagnoses among white gay and bisexual men have dropped about 18 percent over the same period. Among women, diagnoses declined by 40 percent. Black women, especially, have seen the sharpest decline in new infections, which have been cut nearly in half. But mainstream reporting paid little attention to the CDC's finding that last year, African-Americans accounted for almost half — 44 percent — of all new HIV diagnoses. Gay men make up only 1.4 percent of the total black population in the U.S., yet they account for an astounding percentage of new HIV infections among blacks.

• Judges orders children removed from home

A same-sex couple in Utah lost their foster child after a state judge determined that children don't do as well in LGBT homes. April Hoagland and Beckie Peirce say the baby they've loved and raised for the last three months will be taken from their home and moved to an opposite-sex household. Judge Scott Johansen of the Seventh District Juvenile Court ordered the child removed, and according to the couple the judge said he has research indicating children don't fare as well in same-sex households, but hasn't produced his findings. In Kansas, Johnson County District Judge Kathleen Sloan removed a 16-month-old child from Kansas Department for Children and Families custody after finding the agency had not acted in the child's best interest when it took him from lesbian foster parents he had lived with since he was 3 days old and recommended that he be placed with a family that initially had declined to adopt him even though it had adopted his half siblings.

• LGBT Military Spouses Denied Discount

Now we know why their sports team is called the Flames. Liberty University has decided to single out LGBT military spouses for denial of military tuition discounts, according to Military.com's SpouseBuzz. "While other military spouses receive deep discounts on tuition, LGBT military spouses are denied the discount because they are not "natural-born members of the opposite sex," the web source reports.

• Anchorage Ordinance Targeted for Repeal

Anchorage Alaska's LGBT non-discrimination ordinance is targeted for repeal reports the *Alaska Disptach News.* The repeal referendum, if it makes it to the ballot, would ask voters whether Assembly Ordinance 96 protecting LGBT civil rights should remain law. The petition application lists conservative talk radio host Bernadette Wilson as its primary committee sponsor. Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz supports the ordinance.

• Senate Conforms Gay Nominee

The U. Senate has confirmed Michael Michaud as assistant secretary of labor for veterans' employment and training. The agency directs the department's services to veterans, including job training counseling and employment placement. Michaud, a Democrat, had served as a member of Congress representing Maine's 2nd congressional district from 2003 to 2015. In 2013, Michaud came out as gay during his campaign to become the next governor as Maine.

• Indiana Intros Second LGBT Bill

After a disastrous first try, Indiana Republicans have unveiled a second sexual orientation and gender identity bill which provides for exceptions for churches and religious-affiliated institutions such as private universities, adoption agencies and daycares. There are also exceptions in public accommodations for wedding services businesses with fewer than four employees. Schools, businesses and others would be allowed to determine their own policies regarding dress codes and use of bathrooms or showers based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Those rules could not be considered discriminatory under the bill. The bill would also require transgender people to live as their preferred gender for a year or receive a medical opinion before filing a discrimination complaint.

• Justices Asked To Consider Adoption Rights

In September 20915, the Alabama Supreme Court held that an adoption granted years earlier in Georgia to a same-sex couple was "void." One of the women's lawyers calls the decision "glaringly, clearly wrong," and they are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to take up her appeal. The Supreme Court could revisit the issue of same-sex couples' rights as soon as this term, reports the *Washington Blade*.

• Obama Supports Altering Civil Rights Act

The White House has endorsed legislation that would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, plunging into the next front in the national battle over LGBT rights. White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the administration had been reviewing what is known as the Equality Act. Earnest said the White House will work to ensure that the legislative process produces something that balances "the bedrock principles of civil rights with the religious liberty that we hold dear in this country."

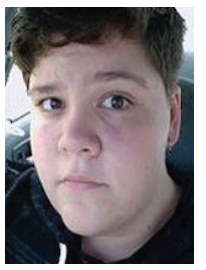
• Lesbian Lawmaker Slams Anti-Gay Colleagues

"God and Governing," produced by *The Texas Tribune*, could just as easily be an episode of *The Daily Show,* featuring right-wing lawmakers discussing how their faith (read: conservative Christianity) influences their views on the issues of guns, abortion, gay marriage and education. But state Rep. Celia Israel, who's Catholic herself and became the state's first out lesbian lawmaker in 2014, rejects the notion that the Lone Star State should be a theocracy. "The way we get things done here is not by reading the Bible, it's by reading the rules of the floor of the House of Representatives," Israel says. Watch: www.thenewcivilrightsmovement.com

• Intersex Person Sues State Department

A federal lawsuit has been filed by Lambda Legal against the State Department on behalf of an intersex person who denied a passport because they do not identify as male or female. Dana Alix Zzyym, Fort Collins, Colo., who is associate director of the U.S. affiliate of the Organization Intersex International, applied for a passport in September 2014 in order to travel to Mexico City this week for an international conference that will focus on intersex-specific issues. Those who are applying for a passport for the first time must submit a copy of their birth certificate. State Department officials in a Sept. 24, 2014, letter to Zzyym denied the application because it was "unable to fulfill your request to list your sex as 'X,' even though doctors at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed the gender listed on the birth certificate as "unknown." The State Department said Zzyym could receive a passport with a male or female gender marker or withdraw the application.

• Obama Administration Supports Student



The Justice Department has filed a groundbreaking friend-of-the-court brief supporting a transgender student barred by his school from using the restroom that corresponds with his gender identity. Grimm, a transgender male, has sued his school district, Gloucester County School District in Virginia, alleging that the district's policy violates the ban on sex discrimination in education under Title IX of the Education Act of 1972. After the federal district court judge rejected his request for an injunction keeping the school from enforcing its policy barring him from using the male restrooms at the school, he appealed to the 4th Circuit.

• Teacher Asked to Resign over Video

A Conway Springs teacher has been asked to resign after showing students an anti-bullying film that depicts a fictional world in which heterosexual children are bullied by homosexual classmates. Tom Leahy, a social studies teacher at Conway Springs Middle School, is on leave and likely won't return to teaching because the controversial video "upset too many people," he said. "I knew something was going to happen. I just didn't know this would happen," Leahy said.

• Mormon Church Excludes Children

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints says children living in a same-sex household may not be blessed as babies or baptized. Natural or adopted children living in a same-sex household will only be allowed to be baptized once they are 18, disavow the practice of same-sex cohabitation or marriage, and stop living within the household, according to the policy. Such baptism would still require the approval of the church's governing First Presidency. The policy was announced the same day the church told leaders that participating in a same-sex marriage falls under the definition of apostasy. Within days of the decision, 1,500 Latter-day Saints submitted letters of resignation from the Mormon Church in protest citing the policy as discriminatory and harmful to families.

LGBT Organizations See Decrease in Financial Support

As efforts to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people from discrimination intensify, LGBT social justice organizations' revenues experienced a decline in revenue for the first time since the Great Recession of 2007-2008. According to a new report by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), despite the decrease in revenue, leading LGBT social justice organizations are projecting combined 2015 expense budgets totaling $189.6 million, a 12% increase from 2014 expenses.

The 2015 National LGBT Movement Report also found that while individual donor revenue grew 11% from 2013 to 2014, organizations lost an aggregate of $6.3 million of revenue from foundations over the same period, an 18% drop. Half of participating organizations experienced revenue declines, with the average of these organizations experiencing a shocking 20% revenue decline. Comparing participating LGBT organizations to national averages outside of the LGBT movement, revenue for the top 100 nonprofit organizations across the country increased 3.4%, compared to the 0.4% decrease in revenue for LGBT organizations.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the finances and financial health of a key segment of the LGBT movement: LGBT social justice organizations focusing on broad LGBT advocacy, issue-specific advocacy, legal advocacy, and research and public education. The 38 national and leading statewide organizations participating in this report collectively represent 66% of the budgets of LGBT social justice organizations. Among the findings of the report:

Movement groups are highly efficient in their fundraising and programming operations. On average, 81% of total expenses are dedicated to programs and services, exceeding the nonprofit efficiency benchmarks set by American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP) and Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance (BBB).

Fundraising and individual donations continue to increase, with a notable spike in individual giving, which increased 11% from 2013 to 2014 for participating LGBT nonprofits, compared to a 5.7% increase in individual giving for nonprofits nationwide.

General financial health remains strong. In 2014, LGBT organizations reported an average of sixth months of working capital, a 2% increase from 2013.

"Although we rejoiced at the Supreme Court decision granting same-sex couples the freedom to marry, in most of the country, transgender people can be kicked out of their apartments, LGBT students lack legal protections when they are bullied, and anti-LGBT activists are introducing harmful legislation and efforts to repeal existing legal protections at every level of government," said Ineke Mushovic, executive director of MAP. "Now is not the time to reduce support for LGBT organizations."

The report also uncovered some other challenging trends:

While more individual donors are giving to LGBT organizations, still less than 3.3% of LGBT adults have donated to one of the participating LGBT organizations.

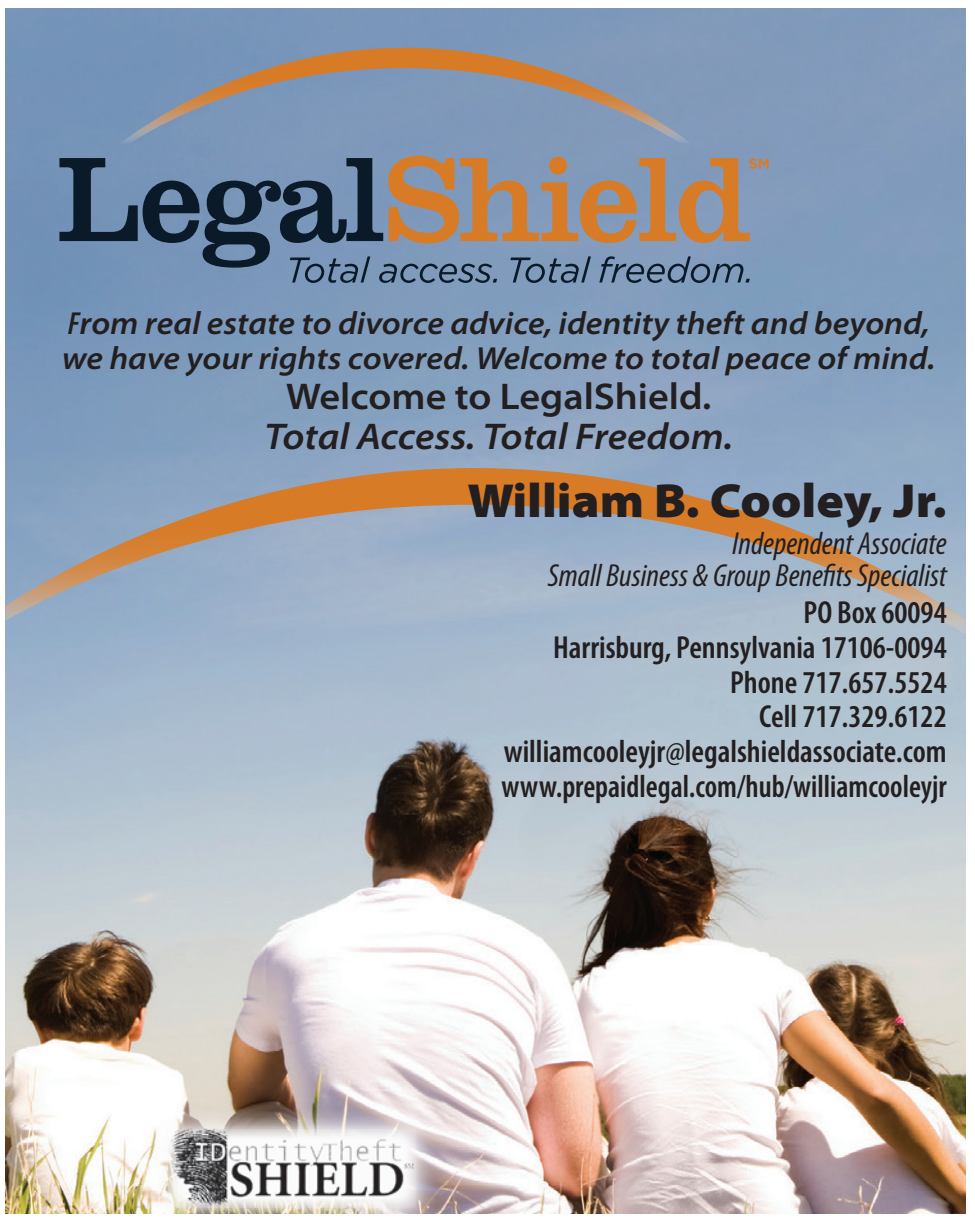
Participating organizations received, on average, 39% of their 2014 revenue from their 10 largest contributors. Eleven organizations received more than 50% of their income from their top 10 contributors. Only five organizations received less than 20% of their income from their top 10 contributors.

Organizations experienced an alarming 18% drop in foundation contributions, which fell from $35.3 million in 2013 to $29.0 million in 2014.

The racial and ethnic diversity of paid staff at participating organizations have similar diversity to the overall population: 38% of paid staff identify as people of color compared to 38% of the U.S. population. However, among senior staff, the percentage who are people of color was 35%. Also, 46% of all staff are women and 8% identify as transgender.

"We end the year with only 19 states and Washington D.C. with comprehensive statewide nondiscrimination laws. Last year, there was a record number of harmful anti-LGBT bills introduced in state legislatures," said Rebecca Isaacs, Executive Director of Equality Federation. "It will require a deeper investment to extend nondiscrimination protections across the country, as well as to preserve our hard-won victories."

Founded in 2006, the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight and analysis that help speed equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Highmark Foundation Awards $103,000 to Alder Health Services

Alder Health Services, a Harrisburg-based organization working to improve the health and well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and members of the LGBTQ community in central Pennsylvania, has been awarded a $103,526 grant from The Highmark Foundation to support its HIV Treatment Adherence Program (ATAP).

In partnership with Coordinated Care Network and Quest Diagnostics, ATAP is used to improve the overall health, well-being and chronic management of HIV positive individuals enrolled in Alder Health Services' medical case management systems. Through the grant, AHS will increase the number of continually enrolled clients in its HIV/AIDs case management, which currently stands at around 300 individuals, and allow for additional focus to be placed on care and screenings by assisting patients with medication adherence. Increased viral load monitoring for some patients will also be achieved. An HIV patients' viral load is a snapshot measure of the amount of virus in the patients circulating blood. The goal is to have an "undetectable" viral load so further damage to a patient's immune system is avoided.

"This generous Highmark Foundation grant of more than $100,000 will go a long way in ensuring that our HIV-positive patients receive the high quality care they deserve," said Rosemary Browne, president and CEO of Alder Health Services. "As a non-profit organization, we depend greatly on external funding sources, like the Highmark Foundation, and we are extremely grateful for their partnership in providing the valuable ATAP services to our community."

ATAP is one of the first programs of its kind, providing step-by-step care assistance to HIV-positive patients. Designed specifically to meet each patient's individual needs, ATAP guides their daily routine by sending text message reminders, follow-up phone calls and check-ups to monitor treatment adherence.

"We are proud to support Alder Health Services through this grant to help improve the health outcomes of individuals living with HIV/AIDS," said Highmark Foundation President Yvonne Cook. "The Highmark Foundation supports initiatives and programs aimed at improving community health. This grant is an example of how we do just that by working with local organizations to address important health care issues."

Available to high-risk Alder Health Services patients enrolled in medical case management, ATAP helps ensure that treatments are adhered to in the most convenient way for the patient, which helps safeguard the continuation of the patient's health care progress.

"The ATAP program provides patients with HIV the opportunity for a more advanced view of their treatment and health outcomes," said Browne. "It provides additional resources to improve the well-being of the patient and allows them to become more compliant with treatment adherence."

On World AIDS Day, December 1, 2015, the Highmark Foundation presented Harrisburg-based Alder Health Services with a $103,526 grant to support the organization's HIV Treatment Adherence Program. From left to right: Rosemary Browne, Alder Health Services president and CEO, Candace Sillers, Alder Health Services staff; Keisha McToy, Alder Health Services staff; Kimberly Snyder, Alder Health Services staff; Yvonne Cook, Highmark Foundation president; Jane Brooks, Highmark community affairs analyst

Bisexual Adults Face Heightened Risk

A research brief published by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation underscores a dangerous but largely hidden crisis--the striking physical, mental and sexual health disparities bisexual people face.

The Health Disparities Among Bisexual People report, based on the most recent and reliable data available on bisexual health and released in partnership with the Bisexual Resource Center, BiNet USA, and the Bisexual Organizing Project, reveals a troubling chasm between the health outcomes of bisexual people and those of the rest of the population - including gay men and lesbians.

"Bisexual people are the largest single group within the LGBT community, but we're not addressing their specific healthcare needs," said Tari Hanneman, Deputy Director of the Health and Aging Program at the HRC Foundation."The reality is that bisexual people face discrimination not only outside of our community, but also from within. And that can discourage them from engaging in and benefiting from the work that LGBT advocates are doing to address our mental, physical and sexual health."

Studies show that bisexuals face elevated rates of poor health outcomes ranging from cancer and heart disease, to obesity, sexually-transmitted infections and mental health issues. The report highlights research showing that:

Bisexual women have higher rates of cancer than the general population of women, higher rates of heart disease and obesity than heterosexual women, and are more likely than all other women to suffer from mental and emotional stress;

Bisexual adults have double the rate of depression than heterosexual adults, higher rates of binge drinking, and are more likely to engage in self-harming behavior, including attempting suicide;

Bisexual men are less likely than gay or heterosexual men to get tested for HIV, leading them to be disproportionately affected by the infection; and bisexual people are less likely to be screened for the human papilloma virus (HPV), which can increase the risk of cancer in both men and women.

"Healthcare providers sometimes make assumptions about patients' identities based on their current or recent partners, and bisexual people often face outright discrimination when they come out in healthcare settings," Hanneman said. "That can lead bisexual people to delay or avoid seeking care, or not disclose their identities to their providers. This can mean that medical professionals are not getting an accurate picture of what that patient's sexual health needs are, or the mental or physical health concerns for which they may face heightened risk."

Recommendations contained in the report, released in advance of Bisexual Awareness Week and the 16th annual Celebrate Bisexuality Day, include calling on healthcare providers to provide inclusive intake forms and paperwork, and to avoid making assumptions about a patient's gender identity or sexual orientation. The report also urges bisexual people to seek out culturally competent healthcare providers and to be honest about their bisexuality; and asks advocates to raise awareness about health disparities faced by bisexual people, and urge better and more inclusive research about the bisexual community.

Bisexual women are more likely than all other women to suffer from mental and emotional stress

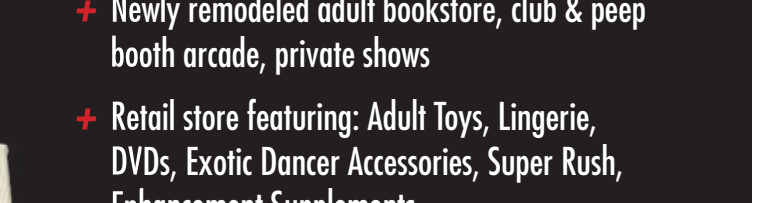
Transgender Day of Remembrance

Nov. 20, 70 people gathered on the steps of the Pennsylvania Capital for Transgender Day of Remembrance memorializing those murdered simply because they were doing their best to live authentically. The annual candlelight vigil recited the names and stories of victims of hate and transphobia. Earlier the same week, the Human Rights Campaign reported that in 2015, the murder rate of transgender women - mostly women of color - has hit a historic high. Not a single murder was reported as a hate crime.

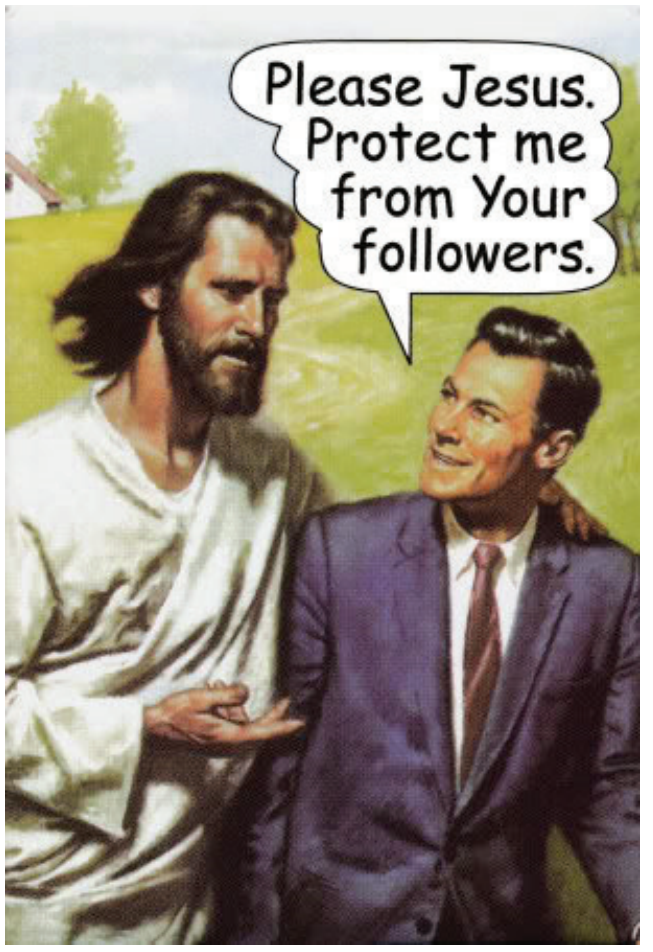
In related developments, a newly formed Transgender Equality Task Force kicked off on Capitol Hill Nov.18 with a two-and-a-half hour long, two-panel event that touched on a range of trans issues, but the murders of at least 21 trans people in 2015 alone was the primary focus of discussion for lawmakers and trans advocates who testified.

Representing the New York-based Anti-Violence Project was trans advocate and community organizer Lala Zannell, who said "hate crime prosecution will only go so far" and Congress must prohibit anti-trans discrimination. "Putting someone in jail in Los Angeles for a hate crime is not going to stop a transgender woman from being killed in Philadelphia," Zannell said. "Housing and a job might."

Meanwhile, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed a rule requiring shelters to treat transgender people according to their gender identity in emergency shelters. "Transgender people's lives are at risk all over the country today because shelters refuse to house them appropriately," said NCTE Deputy Executive Director Lisa Mottet. "This action by HUD advances a common-sense approach that has worked in many communities for over a decade."



Christian Schools Win Title IX Waivers to Ban LGBT Students



Nearly three dozen religious institutions of higher learning have asked the federal government to waive laws that protect LGBT students, according to government documents obtained by *The Column*. The schools are asking the U.S. Department of Education to waive portions of Title IX that might apply to students and staff who are transgender or who are in same-sex relationships. Twenty-seven schools have been granted a waiver from Title IX by the department in the last year, many with the help of conservative religious organizations. Another nine have applications pending.

When Title IX was passed in 1972 to combat discrimination based on sex, Congress added a small but powerful provision that states that an educational institution that is "controlled by a religious organization" does not have to comply if Title IX "would not be consistent with the religious tenets of such organization."

These "right-to-discriminate" waivers were relatively rare until the last year. A handful were requested in the 1980s and 1990s, many by religious schools who wanted to ensure they could prevent women from being hired in leadership roles without running afoul of discrimination laws.

That changed in 2014 when the Obama administration issued guidance that the Title IX discrimination prohibition "extends to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity," meaning that entities receiving federal funding could not discriminate against transgender and gender nonconforming people.

In response to that guidance, and several lawsuits, conservative Christian leaders have begun positioning the schools to expel transgender students.

Add to the mix the Supreme Court decision that effectively legalized same-sex marriage in 2015. Leadership at Christian schools have begun to worry that they will be forced to house legally married same-sex couples, and have been positioning themselves to withstand discrimination challenges.

The Department of Education has granted a waiver to 27 religious colleges and universities in 17 states over the last 18 months. The total enrollment of these schools tops 80,000 students, and nearly $130 million in federal research grants and student aid flowed to these institutions of higher learning in 2014. Those waivers are coming in at a rapid clip, and another 9 are pending as of August 2015. Though they span the United States, almost all are in the South or West.

Thus far 36 schools have asked for the waiver. According to documents obtained in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by The Column in July, these schools have asked the federal government for these waivers not only to deny enrollment to or expel transgender students, but the broad-based waiver requests have also targeted gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and staff. In some cases schools have even asked for, and been granted, a waiver to allow them to expel women who have been pregnant outside of marriage.

Banning transgender students

News that schools were requesting such waivers first surfaced in July 2014, when Inside Higher Ed reportedthat three Christian colleges — George Fox University in Oregon, Spring Arbor University in Michigan, and Simpson University in California — had requested and received a waiver from the federal government's Title IX.

In the case of George Fox University, a transgender student had been denied housing at the Quaker school, and subsequently filed a complaint with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. That complaint was dismissed as George Fox had already been granted a waiver to Title IX, and could discriminate against transgender and gender nonconforming students. But, the case generated headlines and petitions, and the university made some small concessions including allowing transgender students who had undergone gender affirmation surgery to live in gender segregated housing.

In 2013, Biola University in La Mirada, Calif., began crafting language barring transgender students at the same time a fellow Christian college, California Baptist University, was facing a lawsuit after expelling a transgender student. Biola's new ban on transgender students read, in part, "In employment and in student life, we regard sex at birth as the identification of the given biological sex of each member of our constituency. We will not accept as valid alterations of one's sex at birth based on experiential variation or medical intervention." The school reached that theological conclusion because "Jesus Christ himself affirmed this in his teaching correcting abuses of divorce stating at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female.'"

Biola then filed its request for a waiver on Nov. 14,

These "right-to-discriminate" waivers were relatively rare until the last year.

2014. "Our request for exemption is limited to the recent interpretation that 'sex' under Title IX also includes gender identity to the extent that such matters conflict with Biola's religious tenets," Biola wrote to the U.S. Department of Education. Biola's waiver was not approved by the department, however. The school did not prove that it was controlled by a religious entity. Biola has the option of providing more information to DOE.

But Biola didn't craft the discriminatory language it used for the anti-transgender portions of its handbook nor for the application for the waiver. Those were crafted by the Christian Legal Society as a "sample policy" and used by Biola verbatim.

Though Biola's waiver still pending, dozens of other schools have had waivers approved. Anderson University based in central Indiana sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Education on January 7, 2015 asking the department to waive "provisions of Title IX to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion."

The department granted that request in full. "The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets," the response, dated Feb. 11, 2015, stated.

Though Anderson University is affiliated with the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), it used language in its waiver that is similar to 15 schools affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Those schools used nearly identical language that says they are seeking exemption from Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion."

A partial list of schools applying for Title IX waivers includes: Carson-Newman University, Charleston Southern University, East Texas Baptist University, Howard Payne University, Judson College, Louisiana College, North Greenville University, Oklahoma Baptist University, The Baptist College of Florida, Union University, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, University of Mobile, University of the Cumberlands, William Carey University, and Williams Baptist College.

Local Rep. Patty Kim Co-chair for 2016 MLK Day

Kim

The Central Pennsylvania Martin Luther King Day of Service Committee named state Rep. Patty Kim, D-Dauphin, co-chair for Harrisburg's 2016 MLK Day of Service.

Kim said she is honored to serve as a co-chair and plans to continue the positive work of the committee. "Over the last seven years, a strong foundation has been built to honor Dr. King through our actions on MLK Day," Kim said. "It's important to me to continue this tradition of making an impact in our community."

Melissa Snyder, a founding member of the Central PA MLK Day of Service Committee, said Kim was chosen with Aaron Effiong to serve as a co-chair because she has participated in the MLK Day of Service for years and is a strong advocate for service to the community.

President Bill Clinton signed legislation making the Martin Luther King holiday a national day of service in 1995. Over the past 20 years, millions of people have volunteered across the country on the January holiday.

The Central PA MLK Day of Service Committee was formed in 2009 and hosted its first event at Harrisburg School District in 2010. Community organizations and nonprofits interested in hosting a service project, and interested volunteers, can register to participate on the committee's website at www.centralpamlkday.org.

Asexuality *Part of the Sexual Continuum* *(from page one)*

allosexual (non-asexual) LGBT+ community members. One woman wondered whether asexuals "[have sex] eventually at some point."

"I pity your poor soul. Because I don't stand for what you stand for," one man said to Jay.

Asexuals are subject to a unique kind of problem. Sex is everywhere in society, and while some aces are fine with having sex, many are sex-repulsed. Some asexuals are also aromantic, meaning that they do not experience romantic attraction, and may struggle with images and ideas of sexuality as well as romance. But romantic orientations can exist in any combination with sexual orientations, and not all asexuals are aromantic.

Asexuality also exists along a spectrum. There are multiple ways of being asexual. For example, gray-asexual individuals rarely experience attraction, and demisexual people only experience attraction after forming a strong bond. (For more terms, see Glossary at the end of this article.)

I happen to be asexual and gray-polyromantic aroflux (the prefix "poly-" meaning that I'm attracted to multiple genders). Figuring out my orientation wasn't easy. I thought I was straight for quite a while. But I realized that something wasn't right when I began to consider that I had never felt as if I really wanted to have intercourse with anyone. I never thought of having sex as some kind of ultimate goal like other people do. I wasn't "excited" about losing my virginity and tended to laugh at or be disgusted by the "obligatory sex scene." And I started to realize that I had only had a few crushes in my life, and that I was starting to feel attracted to other genders besides just males. Even now, I wonder whether I had crushes on some girls in my life before I figured out that I was romantically attracted to them.

You might be wondering if the same is true for you, or wondering if there is some way that you can help.

Above all, I have to say one thing: We just want our identities validated. We want you to believe in the concept of asexuality and advocate for awareness.

If you read this and are asexual or have begun to question, I have some advice for you. Do not let attackers get you down. Your identity is valid, and you are not too young to know, even as you approach your twenties. You aren't in denial, you don't have to try it, and you don't have to let anyone know about your identity if you don't feel comfortable being outed. Please take care of yourself. It's what I feel is most important for myself and for all asexuals.

If you want to learn more, check out these resources:

***asexuality.org** – AVEN official site*
asexuality.org/wiki
theasexualityblog.tumblr.com
asexualityarchive.com
aromantic.wikia.com
demigray.org
swankivy.tumblr.com
anagnori.tumblr.com

Glossary *of* terms:

asexual: *does not experience sexual attraction.*
aromantic: *does not experience romantic attraction.*
demi-: *will only experience attraction after having formed a strong bond.*
gray-: *rarely experiences attraction.*
quoi-: *fits on the spectrum, but not into a specific category, cannot distin***guish.** *romantic/platonic or does not understand attraction.*
akoi-: *experiences attraction but does not really want it reciprocated.*
cupio-: *wants a relationship but does not experience attraction.*
aro/aceflux: *feelings toward romance/sex fluctuate from repulsed to neutral to positive.*

The Business of Human Sexuality

By Central Voice

When Alfred Kinsey released his earth-moving reports on human sexuality, how could he have known what he'd started?

Men
In 1948, the same year Gore Vidal published *The City and the Pillar,* about male homosexuality, and Norman Mailer published *The Naked and the Dead,* criticized for having used the F-word so much, and Truman Capote published *Other Voices, Other Rooms,* often referred to as *Other Vices,* Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and blew the doors off of the discussions around human sexuality.

Women
In 1953, Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, popularly known as the Kinsey Report on Women. Since then the study of human sexuality is big business.

Bisexuals
In its second season, MTV's hit show *Faking It* has presented bisexual tropes and biphobia which critics think is politically incorrect. They want *Faking It* writers to consult with bisexual organizations GLAAD and BiNet USA about their portrayals. Why? Because visibility is important. In GLAAD's yearly report, *Where We Are On TV,* bisexual characters trail behind gay, lesbian, and trans characterizations. When there are bisexual characters, they don't say the word *bisexual.* Bisexuals, especially bisexual youth, deserve to see themselves represented in media too.

Not Straight
The University of Essex study concluded that no woman is "totally straight". Gay women tend to be exclusively sexually attracted to women, while straight women are more likely to be aroused by both sexes, the study says. Researchers asked 345 women about their sexual preferences and compared these with their arousal levels when shown videos of attractive men and women. They found 28% of straight women were mostly aroused by their preferred sex, compared with 68% of gay women. Who knew?

Not Gay
The title of Jane Ward's book - *Not Gay, Sex between Straight White Men* - is not meant to be ironic. Her argument is that while sexual activity between straight white men (SWM) does take place, it doesn't mean that the participants are gay. The book is about exploring the circumstances under which this situation can be said to arise. And with her premise we are - *BaDaBing!* - back to Kinsey. His "Kinsey Scale" assumed that sexual orientation forms a spectrum rather than a simple dichotomy, with 0 being completely straight and 6 completely gay. Somewhat surprisingly, Ward mentions Kinsey only in passing. You'll have to buy the book to find out more. It's complicated.

Up Close & Personal:
Abortion Clinic Defense

by Central Voice

Transadvocate.com editor-in-chief Cristan Williams is a trans historian and pioneer in addressing the practical needs of the transgender community. She started the first trans homeless shelter and co-founded the first federally funded trans-only homeless program, pioneered affordable health care for trans people in the Houston area, won the right for trans people to change their gender on Texas ID prior to surgery, started numerous trans social service programs and founded the Transgender Center as well as the Transgender Archives. Cristan is also editor at TheTERFs.com, a member of the City of Houston HIV Prevention Planning Group, and is executive director of the Transgender Foundation of America.

Williams does abortion clinic defense.

She shares her recent experiences here: *From late November 2015 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z42WLhu8Y1Q*

https://soundcloud.com/cristan-williams/the-moment-things-got - In the clip she's talking with two anti-abortion protesters, trying to de-escalate terroristic rhetoric.

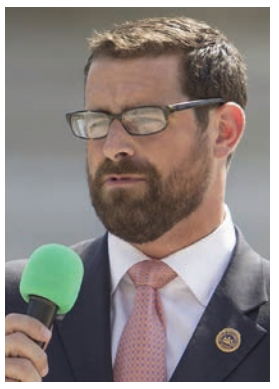
She filmed one of the protestors a couple of months ago - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQE2fsXFxoU

Syrian & Iraqi Immigration *(from page one)*

security checks, 289 to 137, included 47 Democrats who supported the measure. Those Democrats included openly-gay U.S. Reps. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.), Jared Polis (D-Colo.) and openly-bisexual Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.).

"I'd like to think I could have persuaded all three of them not to vote in favor of the measure," Sims said. He noted that he knows all three of them "not well but enough to know them and their districts."

In contrast to follow up analysis of the "For" vote by Maloney, Polis, and Sinema, Sims does not think they would have jeopardized their districts in a future election. "Like Pennsylvania's longtime US Senator Arlen Specter was fond of saying - I vote with my party 90% of the time and my conscience 10% of the time. "They certainly didn't vote with their party on this one," Sims said.



Sims

Grungras

Advocates have urged the White House to allow 500 LGBT Syrians to resettle in the US in the 2016 fiscal year. Log Cabin Republicans is among the groups that support calls to block Syrian refugees from entering the country after the Paris attacks.

Why hold open slots for gay refugees?

Himself a refugee, Neil Grungras, founder and executive director, Organization for Refuge, Asylum, and Migration, started a petition last September to safeguard 500 slots for LGBTI individuals.

"I've collected about 33,000 signatures mostly from the US," Grungras tells *Central Voice.* He stresses the two-fold, extreme circumstances gay refugees face.

Of 70,000 refugees already resettled, fewer than 100 identify as LGBTQI "and that reflects the intense level of fear for their safety, even here, a hold-over from facing beatings, being thrown from buildings, being stoned in their homeland and country of transit," Grungras points out.

"No one wants an immigrant or a refugee to perform acts against the US. We are all on the same page when it comes to the safety of our country and our US citizens," Grungras stresses. "But as LGBTQI people who are refugee candidates they face the threat of death at home and where flee to, everywhere they turn," he pleads. Thus the storm wave of rancor when Maloney, Polis, and Sinema vote in favor of the more restrictive bill.

Grungras delineates how extensions on security checks exacerbates the problem.

If the admission of 10,000 Syrian refugees called for President Obama was scheduled for 2016 "and the process already takes 6 to 12 months, then doubling the times it takes effectively pushes the issue into Presidential election year 2017," Grugras notes.

"LGBTI refugees, among the world's extremely vulnerable populations, face the direst circumstances in a situation of nightmarish proportions," Grungras said. A minor 5% of the proposed 10,000 additional slots would make an enormous impact on the lives of LGBTI Syrian refugees desperately attempting to, against all odds, be resettled to safety."

"ISIS has carried out 30 brutal public executions of suspected LGBTI people videotaped, photographed and distributed via the Internet. No one knows how many have died silently. Thousands more are living in daily terror of being smoked out and murdered," Grugras said.

"When you face beatings, being thrown from buildings and then stoned in your homeland and where you flee to in order to gain admission to the US, how long can you hold out?" he asks.

About 60 people opposed to Syrian immigration expressed their sentiments outside Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's residence Nov. 21. While 31 states have banned Syrian immigrants, Wolf has not taken such action regarding the Keystone State. Across the street, about 25 people also expressed their sentiments on the controversial issue of immigration. A protestor explained that the cross on the flag represented the Knights Templar. Wikipedia says that they were "the most wealthy and powerful of the Western Christian military orders and were prominent actors in Christian finance. The organization existed for nearly two centuries during the Middle Ages. Officially endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church around 1129, the Order became a favored charity throughout Christendom and grew rapidly in membership and power. Templar knights, in their distinctive white mantles with a red cross, were among the most skilled fighting units of the Crusades. Non-combatant members of the Order managed a large economic infrastructure throughout Christendom, innovating financial techniques that were an early form of banking, and building fortifications across Europe and the Holy Land."

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MCC column

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

Our New Frontier - 2016

We've made it through another year and another set of holidays.

During the weeks of Advent, at MCC of the Spirit we looked at five questions that are relevant to the lives of the people surrounding the birth of Jesus and relevant in our lives today. The five questions included: How will I know? How Can this Be? Why Has This Happened to Me? What will This Child Become? and Where is the child?

"How will I know" dealt with Zechariah's lack of trust. He was a devout man who lived righteously in the eyes of God, yet like all of us he had his moment of not trusting. This same question asks us, who do we trust in our lives. Who can we rely upon to be present for us in our lives and in our times of need?

Mary asked the question, how can this be? This question was Mary asking how can I a virgin possibly be pregnant. Mary asked the question that many of us ask ourselves when we are going through difficult times, how can this be happening to me. Mary's response was unique, "Let it be as you say." Mary willingly gave of herself to God and the plans of God. She did not let what could have been a tragedy become her life. How do you overcome tragedy in your life?

Elizabeth asks a similar question, why has this happened to me. Elizabeth was asking how do I move from feelings of unfairness to living in gratitude. Elizabeth lived in a world where being barren was seen as a sin. Her community would have looked upon her as one who was not right with God, as one who must have done something terrible and now God was punishing her. These words might sound familiar to us. Life is not fair yet how we deal with the unfairness will make a huge difference. When Elizabeth became pregnant she had a choice. She could remind angry at her community who treated her badly or she could rejoice with her community over her received blessings. When touch times come in our lives, we have to make a choice. The choice of how we will respond to the negativity of others and the choice of how we will move forward into the positive.

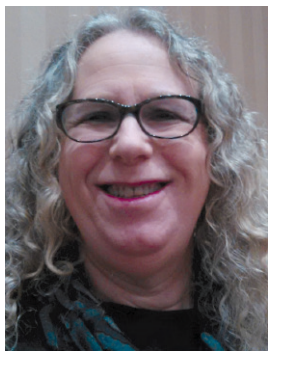
Mary and Elizabeth both asked the same question. What will this child become? Many parents have also asked this same question as they looked down upon their newborn or ask they look at their child as the child ages. We don't know the future. We can ask ourselves this same question as we look into the future. We look forward to an open space. A space that we call 2016, a full year with all its opportunity and possibilities. The future is ours. We control how we will respond to what happens to us. The possibilities are unlimited since we have a future that doesn't exist yet and also limited by each choice we make.

The last question was where is the child? This question was asked by the Magi as they got to the palace where they expected the baby, the King of the Jews, to be. They were probably quite disappointed not to find him present. Yet they didn't give up. They continued to follow the star until they reached that little village of Bethlehem. How will you react when your expectations are not met? When you think you have gotten to your goal but it's not present?

Again, the future is before us as we begin this new year of 2016. As we look into that vast unknown, the true last frontier, we can keep these questions in our minds. Stuff will happen in our lives. We won't understand why it is happening to use and how we handle the challenges, tragedies, and disappointments will make all the difference to how we will look back on 2016.

May 2016 is a year of overcoming challenges, turning tragedies into victories and disappointments into new journeys of discovery. God bless!

LGBT Health Matters



Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania's Physician General, addressed 180 guests at the Nov. 10, 2015, Alder Health Services Breakfast. "Dr. Levine's position on health promotion and disease prevention and Alder Health's mission fit like hand in glove," said Rosemary Browne, AHS CEO. The agency's mission is to improve the health and well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and members of the LGBTQ community by providing a culturally competent and affirming environment that empowers the people we serve. Capital Blue Cross is the event's Major Corporate Sponsor. Pinnacle Health and BB&T Bank are also Corporate Sponsors.

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Why do people choose the type of funeral service that they do for their loved one? Is it because that is all they know, or is it because that is what the person before them did? Or is it because its represents the way the person lived? Most of my childhood was spent playing in the woods, building forts, swinging from grape vines, canoeing down the river, laying in the moss covered ground looking for shapes in the clouds as they passed by, watching birds and listening to their songs, picking wildflowers, climbing trees and so much more. I guess you could say my fondest childhood memories were playing in the woods behind our house. That woods today has been replaced by rows of houses. Gone is my forest playground of yesterday. It has been replaced by brick and mortar, pavement and barren lawns. It's sad sometimes to see the so called "progress of our world." I now own a small cemetery of 33+ acres. 11 of the acres are woods filled with meandering paths through out. The community utilizes them for mountain biking, walking and hiking. It is one of the few green spaces left in the small borough of Paxtang, which borders the city of Harrisburg, PA. We decided to make sure it stayed green by starting the first Green Burial Certified Cemetery in Central Pa. No Vault, No embalming, No Fake Flowers, No Metal or Concrete. In The Wood's Edge we use 100% biodegradable casket or shroud, and the Pa native forest (Trees, shrub and ground cover) is restored on top of every burial. Fitting to the natural setting we use non-quarried boulders to memorialize. The True Ashes to Ashes Dust to Dust Option. Paxtang Cemetery is stepping outside the traditional cemetery box and protecting the forest for future generations to enjoy. If your loved one enjoyed doing activities outside like gardening, bird watching, hunting, hiking, skiing or just being outside observing nature why not honor them with a burial in a setting designed to protect the very thing they loved the most? Come and see it for yourself or check it out at http://www.paxtangcemetery.com/Green-Burial.html.

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photo provided by: Lauren Fischer

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IN TODAY'S DYNAMIC POLICY AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT, HOW A COMPANY INCORPORATES LGBT ISSUES INTO ITS MARKETING SAYS A LOT ABOUT ITS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY. EVEN THE BEST-INTENTIONED OUTREACH CAN BECOME MISUNDERSTOOD. CENTRAL VOICE WILL HELP YOU NAVIGATE AVOIDABLE ISSUES OF CONSUMER BACKLASH AND PUBLIC RELATIONS GAFFES WITH A TARGETED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO LGBT MARKETING.

central VOICE

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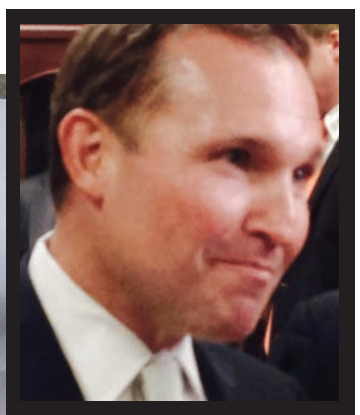
All Together Now:

How Hating Everyone May Backfire

If Jacksonville Florida's Human Rights Ordinance expansion passes, a turning point in the public discourse might have come from someone who tried to silence it reports A.G. Gancarski, FloridaPolitics.com.

Gancarski, writing about efforts to expand Jacksonville's HRO: It's ironic, really, that white male opponents of the expansion of the Jacksonville Human Rights Ordinance objected to locating the so-called community conversations in what they called "high-crime neighborhoods." The worry was that those delicate flowers who might oppose extending basic protections to the LGBT community might be somehow imperiled by going to those high-crime neighborhoods that, said one prominent merchant of intolerance, were "completely dark."



Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry condemned Klan flyers (left) as the "lowest forms of human behavior and bigotry"

While public discussions ensued, the *Florida Times-Union* reports that the Jacksonville HRO debate had its first threat of physical violence recently, and it's horrifying.

Benjamin Manses, a 25-year-old, called a T-U reporter and threatened to bomb the next HRO community meeting. Then he told the sheriff's office, according to the T-U report, that he was drunk and he didn't mean it.

Manses was arrested on charges of threatening to throw, project, place or discharge a destructive device. And honestly, he got off really easily. Very often a bomb threat such as this, in a place that would have a dense concentration of people and public officials, would be judged to be domestic terrorism (which should be an especially salient point in the post-Dylann Roof era).

To Manses? It's a joke. And that illustrates the problem that LGBT people face daily.

Many of them, too many, Gancarski writes, have had to wrestle with the non-negotiable reality of facing discrimination and excoriation, and worse, for differing from the heteronormative paradigm, one reinforced by popular culture and laughable misreadings and misapplications of theology.

The idea of a bomb threat is obvious: to put the idea of danger in someone's mind, to perhaps silence people who might come out and speak with conviction and truth about what they experience and why they deserve the protections that society in theory guarantees them.

Manses wants the people who grew up around him to live in fear of participating in the civil discourse that is, in a perfect world, a prerequisite to people who contribute great and meaningful things to our community having the same prerogatives that straight people take for granted.

If we are intellectually honest, we see again that civil society must protect all of its law-abiding citizens against the depredations of those who would do them harm.

Do we believe in civil society? Or are we yet again going to fall for the fabrications and the false equivalencies of those who would abridge it?

Civil protections, it can't be stressed enough, must protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority.

That's what the HRO expansion is about. It's not about endorsing "special rights." It's about ensuring universal and equal protection.

Meanwhile,

In an exclusive interview with FloridaPolitics.com on Monday morning, Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry condemned as the "lowest forms of human behavior and bigotry" recent bomb threats and Klan flyers targeting the community conversations about potential expansion of the Human Rights Ordinance to LGBT people.

Saying that "public safety is my top priority," Curry noted the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, with which the mayor has been in frequent contact, "tracked down and made an arrest" of the man who phoned a bomb threat into the *Florida Times-Union* regarding the future "community conversations" about HRO expansion.

"The public ought to feel good," Curry said, about the "quick arrest."

HISTORY MATTERS:

Sylvia Rivera was *"mother of all gay people"*

Earlier this year, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery installed the portrait of Sylvia Rivera in the "Struggle for Justice" exhibition. Rivera is the first transgender person in the museum's collection. A forerunner in the fight against gender identity discrimination, Ray Rivera rechristened himself as Sylvia as a teenager. When cast out by her family, she worked the dicey Times Square district as a transvestite prostitute. She was there in 1969 at the turning point of the modern LGBT struggle for equal rights, when patrons of the Stonewall Inn violently rebuffed a police raid. Politicized by this experience, Rivera campaigned with the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) in urging the city to enact a nondiscrimination ordinance. However, facing racism and discrimination as a Latina transgender by the mainly white male GAA leadership, she began to work with homeless teenagers, co-founding the group and shelter STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries). In the 1990s Rivera was embraced as one of the fundamental figures of the LGBT movement. Puerto Rican photographer and Visual AIDS member Luis Carle took this photograph of Sylvia Rivera at the Saturday Rally before New York's Gay Pride in 2000. Rivera is pictured with her partner Julia Murray, on the right, and by fellow activist Christina Hayworth, on the left. The placard at their feet reads "Respect TRANS, PEOPLE/MEN!," stating Rivera's lifelong cause of fighting for transgender civil rights. While Rivera became an outcast from the gay rights movement in the late '70s and '80s, she was again embraced in the 1990s as a fundamental figure in the movement. She renewed her activism, speaking widely on the need for transgender people to unite at the forefront of the LGBT community. In 1994 she was a keynote speaker at Gay Pride in New York, and in 2000 she was invited to the Millennium March in Italy, where she was acclaimed as the "mother of all gay people."

Sylvia Rivera (with Christina Hayworth and Julia Murray) by Luis Carle, gelatin silver print, 2000. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; acquisition made possible through the support of the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center

Wilde Depths

A New Play on Oscar Wilde Opens In Philadelphia

By Debra Miller, Philadelphia Arts and Culture Correspondent

"Oscar Wilde: From the Depths" is scheduled for its world-premiere opening at the Lantern Theater Company on January 20. A new work by the company's co-founder and artistic director Charles McMahon, the original drama is set in London's Reading Gaol, during the time when the Dublin-born Anglo-Irish writer, convicted under Victorian England's Labouchere Amendment of 1885, was serving out a two-year sentence of hard labor for "gross indecency." Taking its inspiration from Wilde's "De Profundis"—a posthumously published letter he wrote to his lover Bosie (Lord Alfred Douglas) from prison between January and March of 1897—the play delves into the mind, emotions, memories, and revelations of the self-described "disgraced and ruined" man, as he sat alone in his cell.

Central Voice: *How long have you been interested in Oscar Wilde, and what inspired your desire to create a play about him?*

Charles McMahon: I've always been interested in him as a character. He's one of those people you keep coming back to at different phases in your life and see him differently as you grow. One question I've always had was why did he pursue the prosecution of the Marquess of Queensberry for criminal libel [after the aristocrat accused Wilde of sodomy]? He must have known that it would be very risky. And when it became clear that things weren't going well [when Wilde himself was counter-prosecuted for his relationship with Queensberry's son Bosie], why didn't he get out of England while he still could? It seems almost as if he had some strange predilection for self-destruction; you can see it in his own writing, especially in his early work. Before he did the classic boulevard comedies, he assumed the role of a symbolist author, in which his characters would sometimes go for the noble sacrifice. There was a fascinating trajectory he took in his life and career, so a while ago I became keenly interested in this moment, the time when he could have saved himself and didn't. I don't think he knew exactly what would happen, he might have expected a very different outcome, but at some point there was a moment of hubris, and then resignation. Everyone who knew him expected him to leave England, but he stayed, and it remains a mystery. He established himself as a great artist, and then his life also became a work of art that he wrote, with a tragic ending. He made the choices, but did he consciously embrace this monumental suffering?

CV: *Why did you choose his time in prison as the period you wanted to explore?*

CM: There's been a lot written about Wilde in dramatic literature and history. Before the trial, he's at the height of his popularity and fame, but if he goes to jail, he disappears and fades away. Then what? It's a most challenging and mystifying exit that he made from the stage! I was interested in that question as the beginning of what I wanted to explore. What was he there to do? He finds incredible meaning and context in everything, and his world view always fits into some mold or another; nothing seems random, including going to prison.

CV: *What approach are you taking in terms of format? Is it a monologue, or are there other characters that interact with Wilde?*

CM: The play has some monologues, but I tried to keep those to a minimum. Wilde is in dialogue with his own memory, maybe even his hallucinations. He had an extraordinarily imaginative mind—he was a true genius. So if you take a mind like his and lock it away, it doesn't turn off, it keeps running. In this script, his mind keeps going on its own, and he seizes command of his own brain again, struggling to reassert willful control. So it's a combination of characters—Wilde, some rare visitors, and prison staff, with other people who show up as memories, not just in the flesh. Interestingly, the English prisons at the time were based on Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary, in which prisoners were not permitted to talk. The intent was to inspire quiet contemplation and personal redemption, but instead it drove people mad. So in Act I, Wilde obsessively remembers and reflects, then in Act II he masters his thinking and becomes much freer with his thoughts.

CV: *Have the roles been cast?*

CM: Yes, they have! The whole show has three actors. Jered McLenigan plays Bosie, along with a number of ensemble parts. David Bardeen also portrays multiple characters, including the Marquess of Queensberry. Marc LeVasseur stars as Oscar Wilde; we were happy that he bears some physical resemblance to Wilde, but we cast him because he brought very impressive skills to the reading. It's a hard character to play; there are a lot of well-known photographs of Wilde, but we don't know how he sounded. Because he's such a famous figure in history, people have created their own idea of him, imagined his voice and inflections, and hold hard and fast to their opinions about him; that can make it more difficult than portraying a purely fictional character.

CV: *Can you give us an idea of the aesthetic of your production, especially since Wilde was involved in the 19th-century philosophical movement of Aestheticism?*

CM: That's a big issue for this production. He's in prison, but at the same time, his memories are not, they're from his past, outside of his cell. We all know that memory can play tricks on us, and recollections are changed by revisiting them, so that we have to keep track of how much of what we remember is from the real event, and how much we are creating from past memories of it. That's part of the design, layering the present with bits of the past. He's in prison, but memories come in. We see the effect in his mind—a mixture of present-day images with a construct of past events, an approximation of what actually happened.

CV: *Should this play be seen as a piece of history, or are there issues that are still relevant today?*

CM: I hope so! Some of the broader issues society struggles with are still very relevant. Wilde was in prison for private behavior, and while that seems insane to us, there are still arguments about civil rights—women's rights, gay rights, the right to privacy--here and now. That's not exactly what the play is about, but it's something that has persisted and becomes clear in any story about Wilde. There's also a universality in wrestling with our fate. His life was a comedy until it was a tragedy, and it's endlessly fascinating to me that it took the turn that it did; it's something for all ages.

CV: *What message do you hope the audience will come away with from the play?*

CM: Oscar Wilde was an extraordinary person, and his biography, if you were to read it without knowing about him, would seem like an exaggeration. But it's not. He's a kind of existentialist hero of modern man, certainly ahead of his time, and an impressive moral figure in his self-examination and his truthfulness about it. That's always timely.

Lantern Theater Company's production of "Oscar Wilde: From the Depths" by Charles McMahon runs January 14- February 14, 2016, at St. Stephen's Theater, 10th & Ludlow Sts., Philadelphia. For tickets, call the box office at 215.829.0395, or visit the website at www.lanterntheater.org.

Charles McMahon Photo Courtesy of Lantern Theater Company

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Local History Project Film 'Brother Outsider'

The LGBT Center of Central PA History Project is presenting a program on Tuesday January 12, 2016 from 6-8 PM at the LGBT Center, 1302 N. Third Street, Harrisburg, showing the film, *Brother Outsider.*

Brother Outsider documents the life of civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, often called the "unknown hero" of the black civil rights movement. Forced out of the closet by circumstances early in his life, he lived as an openly gay African American man from the 1940's until his death in 1987.

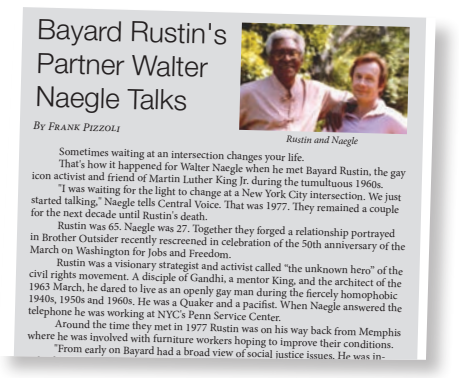
He worked alongside other major leaders of the black civil rights movement, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., beginning in the 1940's, but staying mostly in the background because of concerns by other activists that his being gay would be a public distraction to the goals of the movement. Rustin, the visionary strategist and activist, is considered to be the architect and chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, at which Dr. King delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech. Later in the 1980's, he became an advocate for LGBT civil rights. Rustin was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by President Obama in 2013. It was accepted by Rustin's long-time partner, Walter Naegle, whom Rustin adopted in 1982 because of the lack of legal marriage rights at that time.

Since its debut in 2003 at the Sundance Film Festival, millions of viewers around the world have been introduced to Bayard Rustin's remarkable life and achievements through screenings at film festivals, theaters and on broadcasts on PBS and Logo/MTV. The film is the recipient of more than 25 awards.

The New York State Board for Historic Preservation unanimously approved the nomination of Bayard Rustin's home at 340 West 28th Street for Landmark status today. Now NY will prepare the nomination for forwarding to the National Register.

Bayard Rustin, left, with Cleveland Robinson at the 1963 March on Washington

(below, Bayard Rustin's Partner Walter Naegle Talks to Central Voice, originally published in Nov-Dec 2013 issue.)



Bayard Rustin's Partner Walter Naegle Talks

By Frank Pizzoli

Rustin and Naegle

Sometimes waiting at an intersection changes your life.

That's how it happened for Walter Naegle when he met Bayard Rustin, the gay icon activist and friend of Martin Luther King Jr. during the tumultuous 1960s.

"I was waiting for the light to change at a New York City intersection. We just started talking," Naegle tells Central Voice. That was 1977. They remained a couple for the next decade until Rustin's death.

Rustin was 65. Naegle was 27. Together they forged a relationship portrayed in Brother Outsider recently rescreened in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Rustin was a visionary strategist and activist called "the unknown hero" of the civil rights movement. A disciple of Gandhi, a mentor King, and the architect of the 1963 March, he dared to live as an openly gay man during the fiercely homophobic 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. He was a Quaker and a pacifist. When Naegle answered the telephone he was working at NYC's Penn Service Center.

Around the time they met in 1977 Rustin was on his way back from Memphis where he was involved with furniture workers hoping to improve their conditions.

"From early on Bayard had a broad view of social justice issues. He was in-

Get "Lost in Las Vegas" at Bal Masque

"Lost in Las Vegas" is the theme of the Art Association of Harrisburg's Bal Masque, the March 5, 6-11 p.m. at the Camp Hill Radisson Hotel. All proceeds from the Bal Masque benefit the Art Association's School and exhibition programs.

Attendees join showgirls, casino gamblers, high-rollers, and, almost a given, Elvis Impersonators!

Presented by Higher Information Group and benefitting The Art Association of Harrisburg, The Bal Masque has as Honourary Chairs Rick and Jan LeBlanc. JDK will decorate DJ's Chuck Schulz and Jonathan Frazier will provide music. There is a Silent Auction.

New this year is Live Auction, offering a very special "Chef's Table for 10" at the Millworks, a $1,000 value. A raffle offering a trip for two to Las Vegas is also offered with only 350 raffle tickets to be sold.

While the Las Vegas theme lends itself to wildly-creative costume choices, attendees are also welcome to select party attire – you know what they say about "what happens in Vegas"! Those who choose costumes can compete for prizes.

The Vegas menu features a veritable feast, from bruschetta and mezze to PB-Banana bites worthy of the King himself, to carving stations, to paella. French pastries and coffee conclude the evening.

Goodwill Industries, always an enthusiastic supporter or the Bal masque, will have containers available at the entrance to collect clothing for distribution.

Info: Reservations www.artassocofhbg.com. Tickets are $100 each.

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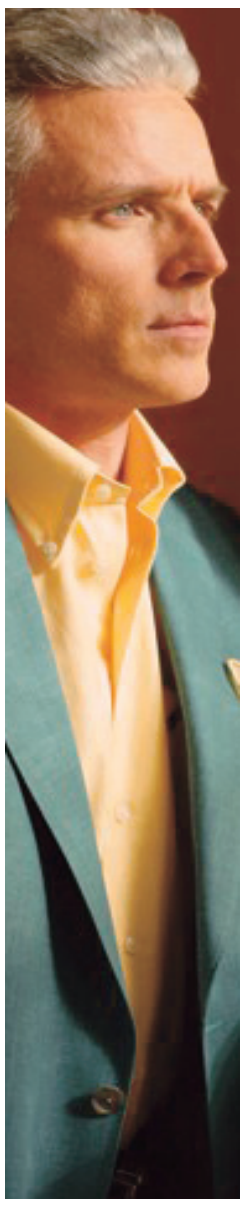

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons
Harrisburg Area Community College

Keeping the Faith

If this year turns out to be anything like 2015, LGBT issues and challenges will continue to make a lot of national news. America became much better educated about the LGBTQ spectrum last year as the country debated same-sex marriage and transgender equality. The U.S. Supreme Court and other courts rendered decisions unthinkable even five years ago.

And at the same time 2015 was a year of backlash. Yes, more and more Americans are supporting our movement toward true equality, but there remain many millions who are pushing back. The 5-4 SCOTUS decision on same-sex marriage shows how divided Americans remain.

As 2015 ended we were reeling from the pushback in Houston that resulted in the repeal of that city's equal rights ordinance. Here was a major U.S. city that had passed a civil rights ordinance including LGBT people, which was then repealed over the canard that (gasp!) men and women would soon be sharing the same public restrooms, where sexual predators would have a field day pouncing on women and little girls.

Then we learned of another city: It turns out Jacksonville, Florida, is the largest U.S. city with no protections for LGBT people, and activists are working to get city council to expand its existing civil rights ordinance to do so. Again, gender-inclusive bathrooms are being attacked.

...more and more young people are open and affirming of the LGBTQ spectrum.

Locally, we were certainly justified in celebrating at the Fall Achievement Benefit the progress we have made. I am especially pleased to see the change in youth over the years as more and more young people are open and affirming of the LGBTQ spectrum.

At the same time, I'm reminded of how little many people know about that spectrum. I've spoken with more than one well-educated professional person who didn't recognize the acronym LGBT. Talking with them I had the feeling they were still stuck in the gay-lesbian binary.

Where are we then? How do things really look as we begin another year?

I think the glass half-full or half-empty metaphor is apt here and can help us maintain a positive attitude toward our struggle. My view of the glass is that it is always both: You can say it's half empty or half full, and both statements are correct.

We live in the eternal present, which means everything is happening all at once. Now I'm not going to be able to explain this idea in the column, so keep reading and try to go with the flow. Time is a human construct, and we believe in the past and the future for good reasons. But again, all we have is the eternal present.

To come to terms with this chaotic, messy and ever-changing life we live, we need to understand ambiguity and paradox. Ambiguity means that we often can't agree on what things mean. Many people see things in black-and-white terms; things are either-or, and that's that. But there are so many views of reality and truth that most of our arguments are clashes of interpretation.

Paradox—I love paradox. How can two things that seem completely opposite both be true at the same time? Well, here's how. Is our world a friendly place? A scary place? It's both.

I like where I am right now, typing this column, but I'm also aware of all the despair and violence happening in the world at this very moment.

Have we come a great way in achieving understanding and equality? Yes and no. This is a process, a journey, and it will never be finished. We rightly celebrate our successes, and we continue to work on the challenges facing us, knowing that we live in an imperfect and troubled world. Does anyone really believe we will someday achieve Utopia?

I'm known for telling people to keep the faith. I do this as a way of encouraging others to keep on doing what they believe in, what they think is right, even as they are assailed on all fronts.

It doesn't matter whether the glass is half full or half empty, it's both. Just keep the faith.

Trum Simmons is professor emeritus of English and advisor emeritus to HACC Allies.

Eric Gutshall Reflects on Campaign, New DNC Effort

by Frank Pizzoli

In the last election, Eric Gutshall ran as a Democrat for Dauphin County Controller, a 'row seat' not held by the Democratic Party for many years. Republican Timothy L. DeFoor defeated Gutshall, 22,072 to 17,507, according to election returns.

Central Voice: *Although a loss, why do you think you received such a high, overall percentage of the vote as a Democrat in a Republican county?*

Eric Gutshall: When I look at the vote totals, I'm proud of what was accomplished. I received 44.2% of the vote in the controller race, which is an increase of over 4% from the Democratic Dauphin County controller candidate in the previous election for this office.

CV: *Why such strong support?*

EG: I think what made my campaign so strong was the broad coalition of individuals who united around what I was standing for – finding ways to make government work better. I'm proud to say that I was able to gain endorsements from both ends of the political spectrum - from conservative Republicans who focus on fiscal responsibility to unions, such as AFSCME and SEIU, who stand up for working families. Even in a county known for Republicans holding such a strong grip on its courthouse, I was able to make a dent.

CV: *You've worked for Pennsylvanian Republican Congressman Todd Platts and now for State Rep. Patty Kim. Now that you have been the candidate, pinpoint what you may have learned from them as you helped them in office.*

EG: At 26, I'm lucky to have worked for and learned from some outstanding public servants.

Some readers may remember Congressman Platts one of the 15 Republicans in the US House of Representatives who voted to end the discriminatory military policy, "Don't ask, don't tell." His unmatched level of integrity and personal motto of "put people first, always" has left a lasting mark on me.

CV: *And now you work for State Rep. Patty Kim?*

EG: After Platts retired from the House, I then went to work for newly elected Pennsylvania State Representative Patty Kim. Working with her day after day, I see her devout concern for the well being of constituents.

CV: *Isn't concern for the people in your district and constituent services the basis of holding a seat in the General Assembly?*

EG: It is something many elected officials will never understand or take to heart. Kim's fight to raise Pennsylvania's minimum wage, provide a second chance for former offenders, and to make sure our children get a quality education has put her at the forefront of many issues.

CV: *And you've learned from all your exposure to the elected officials you've...*

EG: What I learned is that for candidates to be successful they need to build campaigns that focuses on people. Candidates must be willing to devote enormous amounts of time going door-to-door, making phone calls, and building strong connections between themselves and voters.

CV: *You are gay, married?*

EG: As an openly gay, married man, I certainly didn't hide my sexual orientation or my family. In my first campaign press release I was proud to list that I am the Chair of the Capital Region Stonewall Democrats.

CV: *Does being gay make you a better candidate?*

EG: While I do believe being gay has given me a unique experience in life, it is not something that qualifies or disqualifies me for holding public office. I firmly believe candidates for office should be judged on their integrity, character, and stance on issues they might face in the positions they seek.

CV: *You recently participated in the launch of a new project by the Democratic National Committee aimed at identifying emerging LGBT issues and strengthening the bond between party leaders and grassroots activists. This comes as Houston defeated an anti-discrimination initiative, the stalling of transgender rights legislation in Massachusetts and threats of "religious freedom" laws nationwide.*

EG: I'm excited that the DNC is looking to keep a pulse on what's important to the LGBT community by including so many individuals on this new advisory committee. This will allow the DNC to understand what's going on in towns, school districts, municipalities, and states in every corner of the country. It shows the Democratic Party's strong commitment to combating anti-LGBT legislation and initiatives and to promoting LGBT equality nationwide.

CV: *Future plans? Run again?*

EG: Public service comes in many forms. Right now I'm focused on finding ways to help my community and others. My goal is to make government work better and that's what I am going to continue doing.

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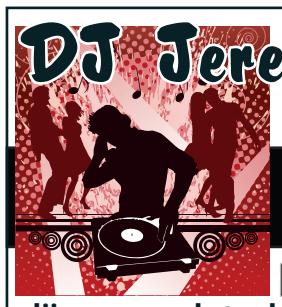

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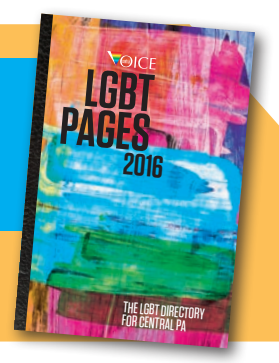

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Still the Boss *from page one*

(CHEST) did a study of men in New York City. Their findings indicated that MSM (Men Seeking Men) who used methamphetamine were THREE times more likely to contract HIV through receptive anal intercourse than MSM who did not use the drug.

Now you might think 'Oh its 2015, surely we've gotten away from Meth, I've only ever heard of it from watching *Breaking Bad*.' And though the numbers have decreased since 2004: 13%, 13%, and 6% in 2011 according to the CDC study I mentioned above - I would venture to say that the rate of infection amongst those who use meth is the same today as it was then. In a Seattle study by the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy released in 2013, Meth-using MSM were 5.2 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than MSM who did not use the drug. In other words, MSM who used meth accounted for up to 20% of all new infections during that study.

Since I've been through Meth firsthand, these numbers are not surprising to me. I had only done meth maybe three times before I became positive. I could go on any of hookup site or app right now and point out the guys using meth – every five or six profiles is probably going to have a reference (sometimes obscure) to that person's meth use, you just had to know what to look for. Never mind the fact that there are hookup sites built just for guys looking for other guys who pnp (party and play).

I could go on about Meth and I will in another article soon but my goal here is to talk about why guys seem to be contracting HIV more often while on Meth. Let's talk about some of the factors involved:

1) The drug lowers sexual inhibitions, impairs judgment, and provides the necessary energy and confidence to engage in sexual activity for longer periods of time. For a lot of guys I've spoken to, when you're high you are up for anything and all of the rules and regulations you had during sober sex go right out the window; there are many ways in which this can lead to contracting HIV.

2) Since you have all this energy and drive you have sex off and on for a long time, for me it was usually three to four hours. I don't know about you but too much fun tends to lead to raw and sore body parts – these raw body parts could create an open wound situation.

3) Meth is a well-documented cause of erectile dysfunction. So the guy who can't get an erection might choose to be the bottom instead, and bottoming carries a higher risk of infection than topping.

4) Meth causes 'mucosal dryness' – imagine the worst cotton mouth you can and times it by five in your mouth and anal area and this dryness can cause tissue tears and everyone knows that a tear is the gateway to infection.

5) When I was on Meth and especially when I was coming down from it, I always felt less inclined to take good care of myself, including forgetting to take my medication or skipping a doctor's appointment. This could lead to having sores in the mouth that haven't been checked, or ulcers or hernias in the rear that could present a problem, amongst a host of other problems. But, for me, the real concern is HIV medication adherence. Luckily I never developed a resistance to any HIV medicines I was on but it's so easy to create a resistant strain of the virus by not taking your medication every day. So a guy who's not taking care of himself could be putting his partners at risk because his viral load is not suppressed even though he might think it is.

Okay, enough facts and statistics, the point? There are still 13% (or more) guys in the gay community using crystal meth. I am going to say that every gay person in this country knows someone who has done meth or is doing meth … you probably don't know it, but you know someone. And if those guys doing meth are still three times more likely to contract HIV than guys not using, we've got a big problem.

There is absolutely no better way to talk about what we need to do now, as a community, than to quote the men who bravely took steps to address the meth problem in New York City in 2005 - Peter Staley and others from the Crystal Meth Working Group bought a full page ad in the *New York Times*. Its 2015, but their messages are, unfortunately, as relevant today as they were then:

So, here's what we're going to do.

We will take responsibility for our lives and for the health of our community. We will make informed choices about sex and partying, and urge our friends and lovers to do the same.

We will not be silent. We will talk to other gay men about the dangers of crystal meth. We will create honest prevention campaigns so that every gay man knows the real risks of Meth use.

We will show compassion for those who are addicted. Meth is the problem, not those in its grasp. Addicts need treatment, not stigma. And if they're in denial, they need to be challenged by those who love them.

We will fight for more money for drug treatment. We will advocate for treatment programs tailored to the needs of gay men.

And finally, we won't let Crystal Meth destroy another generation of gay men. We will continue fighting the hatred that seeks to diminish our self-worth, our sexuality, and our relationships. We will continue to create and strengthen our political groups, our churches, our sports teams, our social clubs, and our families. We will lead by example, as we have done before.

Danny Pintauro is best known for his role as Jonathan Bower on the popular American sitcom Who's the Boss? and his role in the 1983 film Cujo. He went on to act in stage productions like The Velocity of Gary and Mommie Queerest. Pintauro first appeared on the television soap opera As the World Turns as the original Paul Ryan.

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What Are You Waiting For?

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Do you have a dream? You might already know what that is, but may think it's too insignificant when compared with global concerns.

Or, you may think your dream is too big. After all, who are we to think that we can have the great lives we want when our health may be failing, our bank account is small or non-existent and when we look in the mirror we think, "No way would I date you."

It is at this time of the year that we find ourselves and others reviewing the recent past – last year. We also look forward – to this new year – to accomplishing all the things we wished we'd done last year. Holiday consuming may cause us to think more about going to the gym or starting a diet. Spending over the past month may soon create surprise or shock when the bills start arriving in January. We are resolute that we will change, that it won't be this way next year and we know we can do it.

Unfortunately, most of those resolute decisions (I believe they're called "New Year's Resolutions?") fall to the wayside before the end of January. Why? Because we have made decisions out of desperation and that can only lead to desperate consequences.

You don't have to change one, single, solitary thing about your body, the way you live or how you eat. Not one.

That is, of course, unless you want to. Notice that's not what you should do, or what you need to do, but what you want to. I know you don't like feeling like a victim. Who does? But when we degrade and guilt ourselves into making changes in our lives it's an exercise in futility besides victimizing ourselves. We have to genuinely want to change and for the right reasons.

But, you may ask, if I want to change for the better then how could that be a wrong reason? Simple. Say, you're comfortable at the weight and body type you possess. But seeing ads for skinny, white people on TV convince you that you're not good enough. It doesn't help when your partner or spouse gets all excited watching those same commercials. Changing who you are because of what others say you should be would be the wrong reason.

Conversely, you look in the mirror and just don't like what you see because, and only because, you don't like what you see. Maybe that means gaining weight. Perhaps that means cutting out ice cream before bed. It might mean using the gym membership you already have. But it's not because you're concerned with what others think, but rather how you feel in your skin. You decide to change because you want to change.

The next step is to, well, change! We know we want to do something, but we still don't act. Why? It can be because we don't feel worthy of our goal or dream. We might think that it's out of our range, but if we continue to affirm those doubts then we're setting ourselves up for failure.

We can start now to have the life we want or accomplish the goals we set out to fulfill our greatest dreams. It's that old story about how you eat an elephant – one bite at a time. Not all our dreams are elephant-sized, but even the little ones can scare us off if we allow them to do so.

We have before us more opportunities at this time in human history than ever before. The question is whether or not we are going to take advantage of them. But does this sound like some all-too-familiar exercise in stroking our ego? After all, we live in a world that is growing increasingly complex. Shouldn't we be concentrating on helping others?

Taking care of ourselves and following our passion is not a reward we are granted upon the completion of decades of selfless, perhaps even martyred, service. Self-care and cultivating our unique gifts is what allows us to serve others and our planet from an unlimited source of energy and creativity.

Far too many people live life wondering what others think they should do. To do this, or to refuse to live authentically, we are in essence robbing the planet and those around us of our talent. We needn't wait to reach a certain age, complete a degree or wait for the children to leave for college.

The only real thing holding us back is our own reluctance to create an amazing life. You've suffered long enough in some area of your life. Aren't you willing to try something else? What are you waiting for?

Karanen is an author, speaker, licensed social worker and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at blog.terrydrewkaranen.com. He is also the director of Spirit, Mind and Body Foundation (spiritmindbodyfoundation.org).

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director

New Programs

The LGBT Center is proud to open satellite programs in York and Lancaster. For about a year starting in August 2014, the center collected feedback from LGBT people in the greater York and Lancaster areas, to determine what types of meet-up groups were desired, and what kind of volunteer infrastructure could be created to implement these types of groups.

For both areas, it became clear that there was a desire to replicate the social and educational programs held at the center's primary Harrisburg location for LGBT women and LGBT seniors, and to also create similar opportunities for LGBT men and LGBT parents. (To be clear, the program for LGBT parents is for LGBT people who are also parents, not parents of LGBT youth, who are served in this area by PFLAG chapters in Mechanicsburg, York, and Lancaster.)

These monthly meet-up groups will be social and educational in nature, with discussion topics and activities directed by the groups themselves. The goals are to create community, network, share information on LGBT-friendly resources, learn, build substance-free social space, make sure our communities are visible, and identify outreach opportunities.

On Monday nights from 6-8 p.m., Lancaster programs will take place at The Candy Factory, 342 N Queen Street (Warehouse D, Rear). 1st Mondays of the month is a meet-up for LGBT Seniors, 2nd Mondays for LGBT Women, 3rd Mondays for LGBT Parents, and 4th Mondays for LGBT Men. On Wednesday nights from 6-8 p.m., York programs will take place at Heidelberg UCC, 47 W Philadelphia Street. 1st Wednesdays of the month is a meet-up for LGBT Parents, 2nd Wednesdays for LGBT Men, 3rd Wednesdays for LGBT Seniors, and 4th Wednesdays for LGBT Women.

Each of these eight meet-up groups also has a correlating Facebook group that may be joined to keep conversations going, share resources, and otherwise connect outside of the meet-ups. Links to each of these Facebook groups can be found online.

These monthly meet-up groups will be facilitated by a team of volunteers who were trained in Fall 2015. With the center's staff of two, it would be impossible to hold these satellite programs without dedicated volunteers. Thanks to those who have already agreed to help facilitate; if you are interested in becoming a volunteer in this capacity, contact the center's operations manager Pat Van Horn at pvanhorn@centralpalgbtcenter.org.

This is an exciting time for expanding LGBT programs regionally. These new programs join several ongoing center programs and services outside of Harrisburg, including the long-standing Friday night safe space group for LGBTQ youth in Lancaster, the annual Lancaster Pride Festival and Celebration, the annual GSA Leadership Summit, the LGBT History Project archives in Dickinson College's Archives and Special Collections, and community education. To have the ability for LGBT people in the greater York and Lancaster areas to find a local community and participate in social and educational programs is a great enhancement of connecting LGBT communities throughout the region.

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Receives National Grant

Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce last August in front of a packed ballroom at the fabulous Marriott Harbor Beach Resort in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was again recognized for excellence. The organization was awarded $2,5000 for programming, courtesy of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and Wells Fargo.

Funded by the Wells Fargo Foundation, the grant was awarded to expand capacity and offer technical assistance to the CPGLCC Business Development Program. The main goal of the program is to foster the development, growth, and sustainability of certified LGBT business enterprises (LGBTBEs).

"The CPGLCC Business Development Program has become a vital resource to our LGBTBE members as they advance their businesses and engage in strategic planning," said Harry Young, chamber president. "We are thrilled to receive this generous grant from Wells Fargo and NGLCC which will allow us to expand and enrich our program."

"At Wells Fargo, we are committed to supporting diverse chambers of commerce and small businesses," said John Lake, Vice President and LGBT Segment Manager for Wells Fargo Enterprise

Chamber Events:

Mark your calendar for Jan. 27, the chamber's Annual Dinner and Fundraiser at The Hotel Hershey. Robin Dillard, publisher of Infinity, Inc. Magazine, is keynote speaker. Dillard is a central Pennsylvania native and has been a regular annual dinner attendee.

The Nov. 17 mixer was held at Harrisburg's Kresvky Center and sponsored by the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus and Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus.

Lesbian Couple Mercilessly Harassed but Survives

Datres

By Bill Burton

Editor's note: These occasional local history features honor the stories of those who fought before the partial rights we all enjoy were granted. Someone always came before you.

In June of 2015 the Supreme Court of the United States made marriage a constitutional right for same-sex couples. Within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, lesbians and gay men can now be a part of the social norm and begin to live their lives together, recognized as married coupled.

But decades ago this was impossible. Same-sex couples who took the chance to live together risked the possibility of harassment and marginalization by their neighbors, and society as a whole. While we celebrate the right to marry, we should never forget the history of harassment that we experienced in our long fight for equality.

One such story is that of Nancy Datres and her partner, Rita.

In 1978, Nancy had just completed classes at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), where she had achieved a 4.0 grade point average. This lead to a teaching position at HACC.

She had just met a wonderful woman named Rita in 1978, a registered architect. Nancy fell totally in love, "I just never felt about anyone the way I felt about her. I never had that feeling." Nancy and Rita were so much in love that they decided to get married. The only marriage option available to them in the late 1970s was a "Certificate of Holy Union," offered by the Metropolitan Community Church. So Nancy and Rita traveled to Baltimore to marry and begin their lives together.

After a few years, they decided to buy a house in Middle-Paxton Township, Pennsylvania, a bucolic small town of 4,000 people outside of Harrisburg. It was idyllic location, next to a river. As Nancy recalls, "It was beautiful, I mean because you could sit on your porch and see the geese in the summertime, the Canadian geese, the white egrets, everything. And I like to fish, so I would just go out fishing, and we bought a canoe, and we'd go out in a canoe. It was wonderful." But Nancy's and Rita's joy would not last long - it would soon turn into a nightmare.

Nancy and Rita lived on street, so narrow that cars had to pull over in order to pass. At the end of their street, in two adjacent houses, lived two women. One was married with children, and in the other house, a single woman. Both had been friends their entire lives. When the two women discovered that two single women were living together in one house down the street, they became incensed, and decided to harass Nancy and Rita.

It all started in the summertime when Nancy and Rita would ride their bikes down the street to get to the road leading to the river. When they would pass the women's two houses, the two women would get into their cars and follow Nancy and Rita down to the road where they would suddenly shout from their open car windows, "Pussy-eaters!" "Pussy-eaters!" This ugly harangue would continue until Nancy and Rita reached the bike path and were safely out of sight. The surrounding neighbors and other people driving by all heard this tirade, since it was the summer, and many had their windows open to enjoy the fresh air.

Not satisfied with leveling these abusive verbal assaults every time Nancy and Rita went for a bike ride, the two neighboring women had put up large signs at each end of the road that read "Two Lesbians Here, ## River Road." In a continuous stream of harassment, the women began to send empty mail to Nancy and Rita, simply address as "Two Lesbians, ## River Road, Dauphin, Pennsylvania, 17018." In total frustration, Rita made an appointment to speak to the Postmaster, at the main Post Office in Harrisburg. Upon showing the Postmaster the letters, he said there was nothing that he could do about it. He stated, "Well, I am sorry, it has the address ## River Road, and so we are able to deliver it. There's nothing we can do about it."

"Is this person that crazy that she's going to shoot me?"

The harassment escalated. As Nancy recounted, "They would do things like scratch and key our cars. They would throw and break eggs in front of our garage. The would throw dildos on our porch, and it was just – all sorts of craziness!" In terror and outrage, Nancy and Rita called the State Police. When the police arrive, they told him what had happened, what the two women had done, and showed him the photographs that they had taken of the damage. The officer asked if they had a picture of the two women actually committing these atrocities. Nancy and Rita did not - they only had the aftermath - and the two women would, of course, deny any involvement. The officer stated that, like the Postmaster, there was nothing he could do. But then he added, "Well, don't you kind of expect this when you're two women living together?"

Now at their wit's end, Nancy and Rita decided to file harassment charges against the two women in district court. Both sides hired legal counsel, and Nancy and Rita waited for their case to be heard. But before the case went before the court, the situation spun out of control. One morning as Nancy was driving to work, she noticed in her rearview mirror that Emily, the single woman, was following her. Suddenly fearful and not wanting Emily to know where she worked, Nancy pulled into an empty parking lot of an insurance company. The other woman pulled in, her car less than a hundred feet from Nancy's car. The woman quickly reached over to her glove compartment, pulled out a hand gun, and points it at Nancy. In a panic, Nancy was frightened, thinking "Is this person that crazy that she's going to shoot me?" Because one or both of the women at some time had said, 'We'll blow your heads off.'" Luckily at that moment, someone from the insurance company arrived for work and witnessed what was going on. Emily dropped the gun and sped off. Nancy immediately filed criminal charges, confident because now she had a person who was willing to testify to what he had witnessed.

After two years the case went before the magistrate for a hearing. Nancy and Rita arrived with their attorney and their witness seeking their overdue justice. When the District Judge finally commenced court, he stated "It is my understanding that there is a civil case involving this entire situation. Is that correct?" Nancy's attorney argued back that had nothing to do with this matter, which was a criminal offense. The judge responded by saying that it in fact did. "It is a civil case, it's filed, it covers all this, so we are not going to entertain any criminal charges here. We are not having a hearing; we are not having a case. The civil case will handle it."

Left only with the civil suit, with virtually no proof and the criminal charges dropped, Nancy and Rita were now facing escalating legal fees, soaring towards $10,000, simply could not afford to pursue the civil case. Nancy and Rita knew they were losing their fight for justice. But the harassment suddenly ended. The women stopped. After over two and half years of harassment, the emotional and financial costs took its toll on both Nancy and Rita. But the pain and suffering that the two harassers inflicted would always leave scars.

Nancy and Rita remained together for another twelve years, and eventually ended their relationship. Nancy moved out, but the two remain close friends today. Of the harassers, the married woman, as it ironically turned out, had a son who ended up to be gay, who lived with his male partner on the same street. Her son later passed away. Perhaps in her loss and grief, her bigotry and hate were tamed. Maybe this may have influenced her friend, Emily. Rita stills lives in the same house by the river; neither the harassers nor the events ever forced her out. As Nancy reflected on Rita, "It's kind of like [what] Maya Angelou says, 'And still I Rise.' No matter what you put me through, and still I rise."

William Burton is currently working with the History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA, researching and writing about Gay History. He received his Bachelor's and Master's Degree in History from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, with a concentration in Gay History.

Members Added to Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission

Gov. Tom Wolf recently appointed 30 business, civic and community leaders to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander population represents one of the fastest growing groups in the state. "Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to face challenges to language access, diverse educational needs, they are disproportionately impacted by disease and many are uninsured, and there are increasing numbers of unemployment and those living below the poverty line. These are just a few of the issues that I hope this Commission will look at improving over the course of their service," Wolf said.

The commission advises the governor on policies and legislation affecting the diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

Local representatives to the commission are Deep Gupta, Cumberland County; Thomas Lee and Kiran Patel, Dauphin County; and Phuong Truong, Cumberland County.

Why PA Needs a Non-discrimination Law

ANALYSIS:

By Central Voice

At press time, passage of the PA Fairness Act amending the state's Human Relations Act to include protections for sexual orientation and gender expression was a possible go in a touch and go budget scenario that has broken all records.

"It's significant that the PA Fairness Act is part of the mix," explains Equality PA's Ted Martin.

"The lives of LGBT people are finally getting serious attention," he stresses. "As a state we're surrounded by other states with these protections and without them we are suffering economically," he points out.

Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia have laws against discrimination in housing or on the job and almost as many have bans on discrimination in public accommodations. Protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity are also in place in dozens of cities and counties, including nearly 40 Pennsylvania municipalities. Many of the jurisdictions have those protections in place through the efforts of Equality PA working with local activists and advocates to pass ordinances.

Advocates point out why they think Pennsylvania needs an LGBT non-discrimination law.

For example, the Heritage Foundation's Ryan Anderson is one of the leading voices of the movement opposed to full legal equality for LGBT people. In the wake of the Supreme Court's marriage equality ruling, he rushed out a book designed to be a road map for a continuing culture war to resist and overturn marriage equality.

Recently he published another broadside against the LGBT movement — this one a Heritage Foundation "backgrounder" making the case that laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity are unnecessary and "threaten freedom." Given that Anderson is actively arguing for a generational culture war against marriage equality, it is somewhat difficult to take seriously the concern stated in his new paper that nondiscrimination laws "risk becoming sources of social tension rather than unity."

Echoing the language of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Anderson starts by saying, "All citizens should oppose unjust discrimination," adding, "but sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) laws are not the way to achieve that goal." His claimed opposition to unjust discrimination may sound promising but, like the bishops, Anderson suggests that moral judgments about homosexual behavior are always legitimate justifications for discrimination.

Government, Anderson says, should never penalize people for expressing or acting on their view that marriage is the union of husband and wife, that sexual relations are properly reserved for such a union, or that maleness and femaleness are objective biological realities that people should accept instead of resist. Such views are inherently reasonable, even as people continue to disagree about them.

SOGI laws, he says, "do not protect equality before the law" but "grant special privileges."

Anderson makes a libertarian anti-regulatory argument, charging that SOGI laws "expand state interference in labor markets, potentially discouraging economic growth and job creation," though he offers no evidence that nondiscrimination laws have that economic impact. (A 2015 study by a Colorado-based think tank found no evidence that anti-discrimination laws hurt small business growth.) Anderson says such laws "chip away at the at-will employment doctrine that has made the American labor market so much stronger than European labor markets."

Anderson argues instead for "liberty under law," saying employers should be allowed to fire employees for virtually any reason, and insists that nondiscrimination laws make that harder to do by making employers subject to legal action for violating those laws. Under Anderson's conception of liberty under law, businesses as well as charities and civic associations "would be generally free to operate by their own values." He argues that the free market will take care of problems with unjust discrimination:

Any business in the United States that posted a "no gays allowed" sign would soon find the power of public opinion expressed in the marketplace intolerably costly, without any need for the government to weigh in.

Anderson's 15-page paper summarizes its key points thusly:

· Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) laws pose serious problems for free markets and contracts, free speech and religious liberty, and the health of our culture and pluralism.

· SOGI laws threaten Americans with liability for alleged "discrimination" based on subjective identities, not objective traits.

· SOGI laws mandate bathroom and locker room policies that undermine common sense in the schoolhouse and the workplace. They expand state interference in labor, housing, and commerce.

· Sexual orientation and gender identity are radically different from race and should not be elevated to a protected class in the way that race is.

· Market competition can provide nuanced solutions that are superior to coercive, one-size-fits-all government SOGI policy.

Martin

Anderson describes SOGI laws, including the proposed federal Equality Act, as if they are a secretive, nefarious plot by the LGBT movement: Activist groups such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC)—an influential, sophisticated, and lavishly funded LGBT -activist organization—are pushing SOGI laws on unsuspecting citizens at the federal, state, and local levels. HRC's anual budget is $33 million. The Heritage Foundation, whose 2013 income topped $112 million, with its political arm Heritage Action bringing in another $8.8 million — together more than double the combined income of HRC and its educational arm. Heritage has assets of well over $200 million, according to filed documents.

Anderson, of course, does not mention that more than two-thirds of Americans – 69 percent – support laws to protect LGBT people against discrimination in workplaces, housing, and public accommodation, according to a 2015 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute. Even 60 percent of white evangelical Protestants support workplace nondiscrimination laws. "In fact," reports PRRI, "fully three-quarters (75 percent) of Americans incorrectly believe workplace discrimination laws are already on the books." In addition, 60 percent of Americans oppose allowing a small business owner to refuse products or services to gay and lesbian people, even if doing so violates their religious beliefs.

In Pennsylvania, the most recent Susquehanna Research Poll found that 74% of state residents support updating the Human Relations Act. More than 400 small businesses signed on to support the campaign to end discrimination against gay and transgender people. Currently, 89 percent of Fortune 500 companies have sexual orientation non-discrimination policies; while 66 percent have gender identity non-discrimination policies. The bishops of three Christian denominations in Pennsylvania have released public letters asking the state to update the discrimination laws to include gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. More than 600 clergy and more than 1000 lay faith leaders from more than 31 denominations have signed on to a moral statement in support of nondiscrimination. The Board of the PA Council of Churches voted in June of 2015 to send a statement to legislators asking them to protect LGBT people from discrimination in Pennsylvania. The AFL- CIO released a public statement in support of protecting gay and transgender people from discrimination. The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Harrisburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce all support updating the law to protect gay and transgender people.

2016 LGBT Political Talking Points

by Central Voice

Democrats

Last November, President Obama announced his support of The Equality Act, which would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley, and Bernie Sanders have also endorsed the Equality Act.

Republican National Committee

The Republican National Committee endorsed a bill that would enshrine discrimination into law under the guise of so-called religious freedom. Democrats understand that these attempts to pass discriminatory laws have nothing to do with freedom — especially when someone can get married over the weekend and get fired on Monday just for being LGBT.

Republican Presidential Candidates

Marco Rubio opposed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and said "I'm not for any special protections based on orientation." Rubio defended Indiana's notorious anti-LGBT law and he opposes marriage equality. He said the U.S. Supreme Court would be "ridiculous" to reach the conclusion that there is a right to marry someone of the same sex.

Rand Paul said "I don't think I've ever used the word 'gay rights' because I don't really believe in rights based on your behavior."

John Kasich said he was "very disappointed" with the marriage equality ruling, and he has not yet fixed the fact that Ohio is still a state where you can get fired from your job for being gay.

Carly Fiorina said "I do not agree that the court can or should redefine marriage."

Ted Cruz said the Supreme Court's decision to legalize marriage equality was "among the darkest hours of our nation."

Jeb Bush said the Supreme Court's marriage equality ruling was "really disappointing" and he has endorsed anti-LGBT "religious freedom" laws.

Donald Trump said marriage for same-sex couples was "not my thing" and he said the Supreme Court justices "let us down" when they affirmed marriage equality.

Ben Carson endorsed Indiana's discriminatory law, said that gay marriage led to the fall of the Roman Empire, and said that prison confirms being gay is a choice.

Chris Christie vetoed bipartisan marriage equality legislation, resulting in a year-and-a-half delay before New Jersey's same sex couples could marry. Christie said, "I am not a fan of same-sex marriage. It's not something that I support. I believe marriage should be between one man and one woman."

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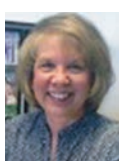

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